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STARS
IN
SAINT DOMINIC'S CROWN
BEING
LIVES OF SOME OF THE SAINTS AND BLESSED
OF THE
Order of Friar Preachers

BY
THOMAS AUSTIN DYSON
PRIEST OF THE SAME ORDER

AUTHOR OF
"THE LIFE OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS," "LIVES OF SOME OF
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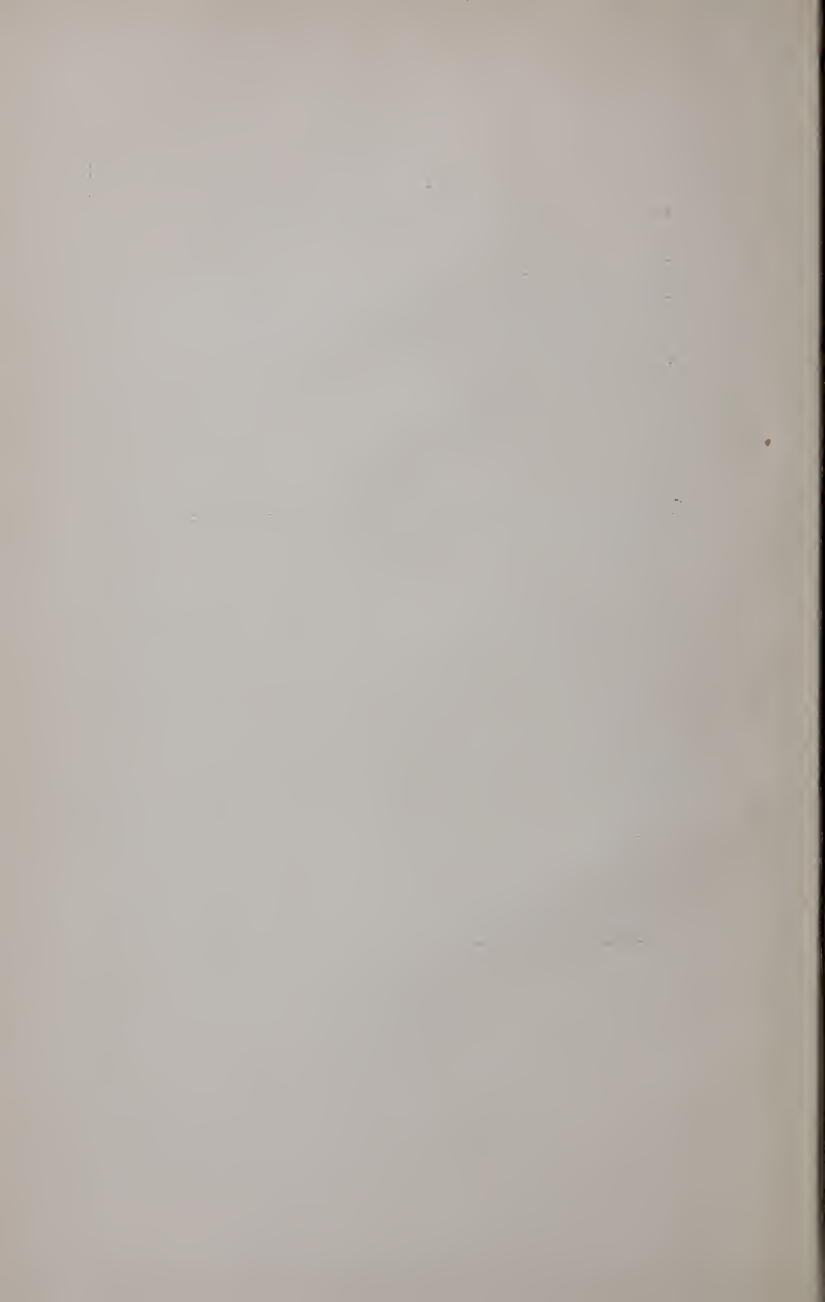
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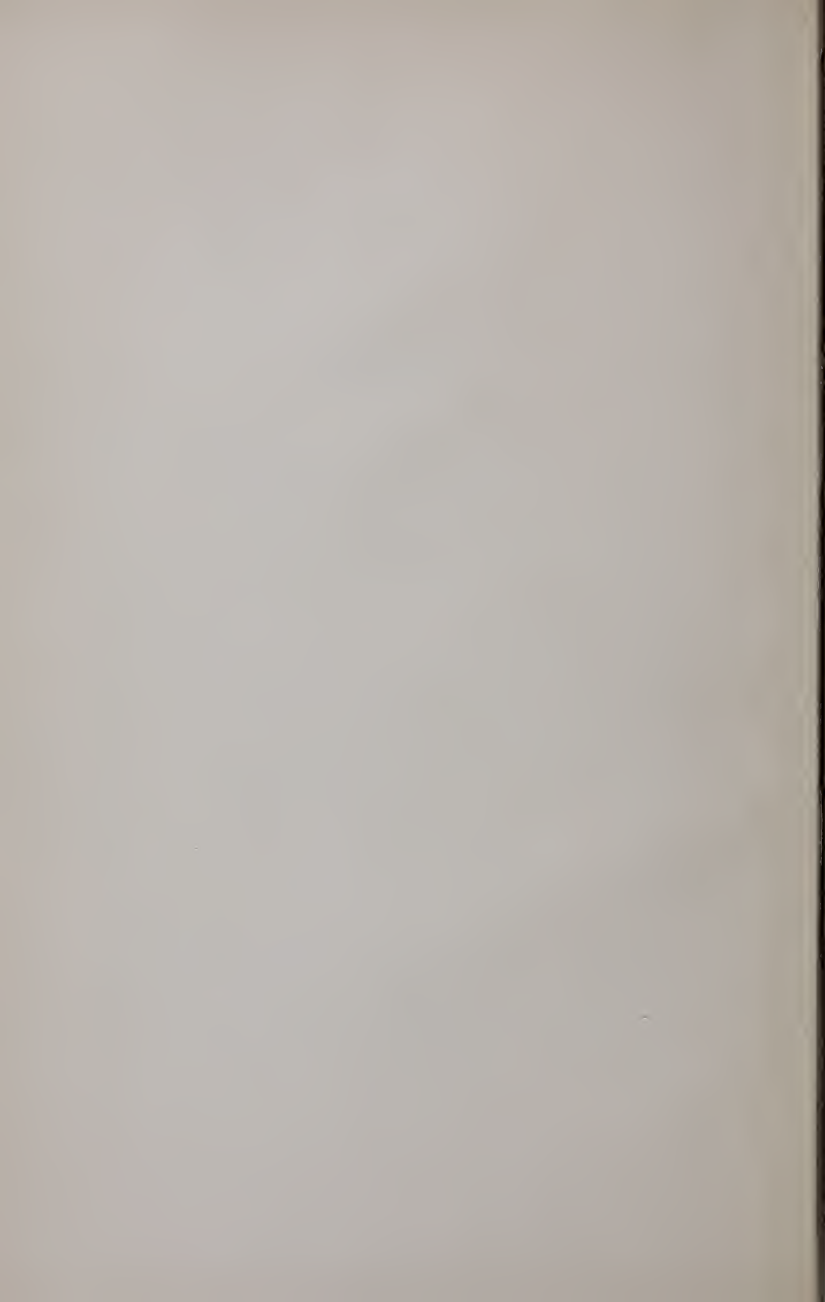
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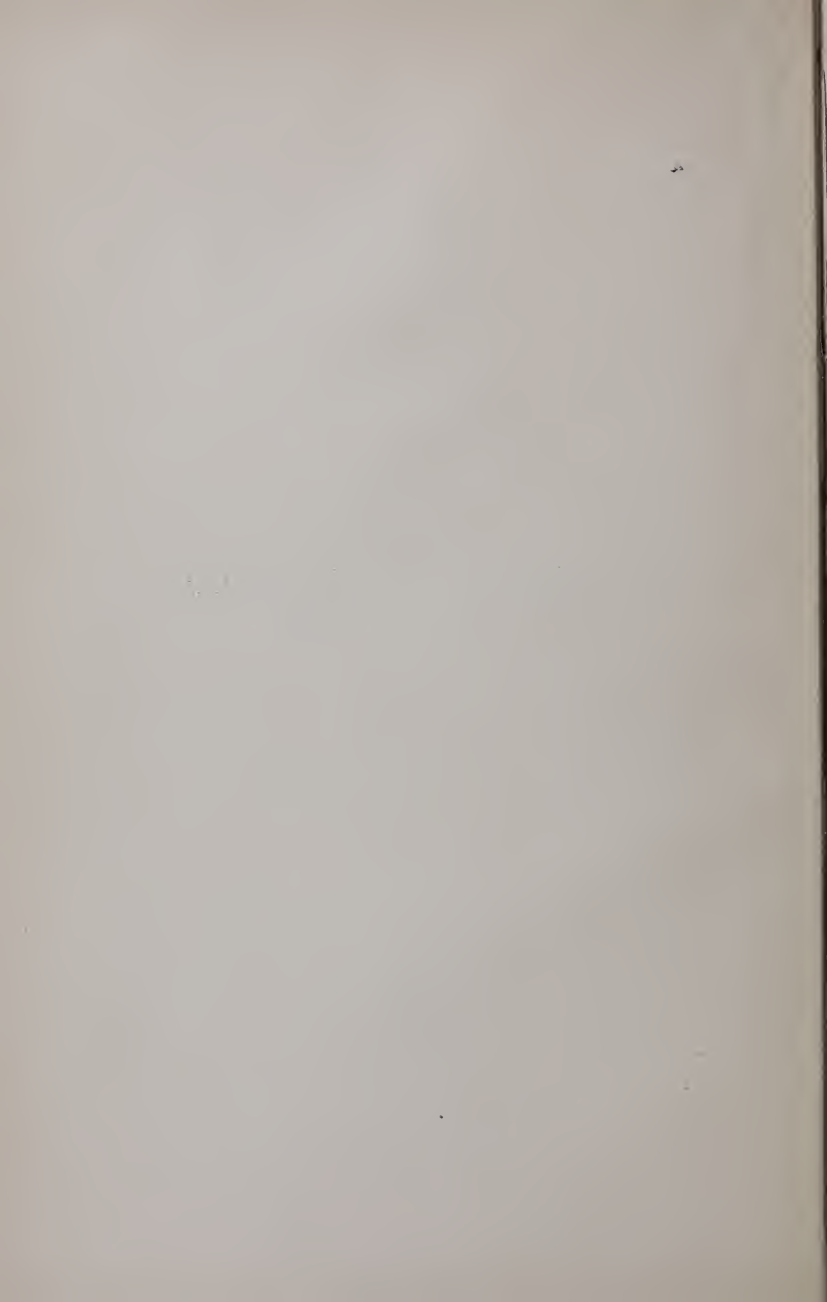
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BLESSED GONZALVO OF
AMARANTHE.



BLESSED GONZALVO OF AMARANTHE.

JANUARY 10.

THERE are few lives of the saints which read more pleasantly than that of Blessed Gonzalvo. From beginning to end it is as beautiful as a poem, interesting as a tale.

Gonzalvo Pereira was born about the year 1187 at Arriconha, a small Portuguese village near Guimaraens in the Arch-diocese of Braga, of noble parents. His youth led every one to foretell his future holiness. It was noticed on returning to his father's house after his baptism that nothing but a crucifix could appease his cries. He looked at it, stretched forth his little hands so eagerly towards it, that many were the surmises that he would become a very holy child, and serve God in great perfection. These hopes were perfectly fulfilled.

One day his nurse carried him to Mass. On entering the church he fixed his eyes earnestly

on the sacred pictures, and stretched forth his arms towards the Crucifix as if to embrace it, and cried most piteously when taken out of church. A like thing happened on another occasion when he was crying very much in the church. His nurse went to kneel before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin. The child looked at the statue a moment, bent its little head as if taking farewell, and allowed the nurse to carry him home at once without any further crying. The sight of holy pictures and images always dried his tears. So, his nurse, not being able to calm him at home, adopted the custom of carrying him to the church, and always with the same result.

His parents consecrated him to the service of God, and kept him at home to study, at first under the direction of a holy priest, and afterwards confided him to the care of the Archbishop of Braga, whose episcopal palace was a seminary in which students for the ecclesiastical state were educated. The charming character of the young man, his docility and innocence, soon attracted the Archbishop's attention, and gained for the young student his esteem and admiration. His progress in study

was as remarkable as was his piety, and, in due time, he was ordained priest.

Soon after his ordination, he was appointed parish priest of the church of Saint Pelagius, one of the most important and the richest in the diocese. Although quite young when he entered on this charge, he soon showed all the wisdom of a man of advanced age and mature experience. Before taking formal possession of his sacred charge he paid a visit to a church, and prostrate before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, implored her to guide and direct him in the pastoral duties laid upon him; after which he set out for Saint Pelagius to take charge of his parish.

His life as parish priest was most exemplary. Far from thinking that active duties in his parish dispensed him from a life of penance, he fitted himself for his pastoral duties by prayer and austerity. He was very affable to his parishioners, always receiving them patiently and consoling them with so great a charity that they forgot their sorrows and sufferings while speaking to him. He visited them regularly that he might have an intimate knowledge of their state of life. He remained

a long time with the sick, animated them to patience, and took great pains to prepare them for death when he saw that there was no chance of recovery.

Mindful of his good name and fearful of the wiles of the evil one, he never allowed any woman to enter his abode, and when obliged to converse with females it was done with his eyes bent towards the ground, and in very few words. By these means he preserved himself chaste until his death. He fasted and abstained rigorously. From his ordinary food which was always the most meagre, he retrenched not only luxuries, but also necessities. He gave much to the poor, devoting the revenues of his benefice to their relief. His house became the resort of pilgrims, and an asylum for the unfortunate. He distributed alms in secret to those who were ashamed to go begging in public.

After he had spent many years of his life as a good parish priest, his constant meditation on the passion of our Redeemer, created in his heart a great desire to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, that he might visit those places sanctified by the presence of the in-

carnate God. For a long period he combated this desire, thinking that his duties as a parish priest required him to remain at home; but after long and earnest praying to God, and after much fasting and penance, he resolved to submit the matter to the decision of his Archbishop. His Grace allowed him to carry out his desire, but would not accept the resignation of his parish, and required him to find some zealous priest to take his place until his return.

Gonzalvo had a nephew, a priest, whom he had educated and severely tried in the way of virtue. He lived with his uncle, and was remarkable for his piety. Gonzalvo thought he saw in him every quality of a good parish priest, and set about instructing him in the duties of that office, before he confided the parish to his care. When at length he installed him, he solemnly recommended him to be full of zeal, frugal in his habits, but above all things to be kind and charitable to the poor. He especially bade him devote the greater part of the revenues of the parish to the relief of their necessities. The young priest listened to his advice, and promised to

carry out all his wishes, even confirming his promises by an oath.

Having his mind at ease with regard to the parish, Gonzalvo clothed himself in the habit of a pilgrim, and set out on his journey. First he went to Rome to visit the tomb of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, then to Venice, where he went on board ship, and after a prosperous voyage landed at Jaffa, and took the road to Jerusalem. He visited every place sanctified by the presence of the Incarnate Son of God during his mortal life on earth, remaining in each sufficiently long to satisfy his tender devotion.

When he arrived at Mount Calvary, where Our Divine Lord was crucified, his heart was so inflamed with love that he desired to die, to make some return for the love which crucified the Son of God for love of us. Absorbed in the contemplation of the mysteries of Christ's passion, he passed whole days and nights on the holy mountain, inflicting penances on himself in humble imitation of the sufferings of the Saviour of the world. He remained three years in the Holy Land, and would willingly have ended his days there had he not been

bound by the command of the Archbishop to return to his parish in Portugal, to take charge again of those souls committed to his care. He therefore tore himself away from the holy places he loved so much, and returned to his own country by the same route he had come.

When he arrived at Saint Pelagius, his nephew either did not or pretended not to know him. His austerities had changed his features, he had made a long and weary journey, was clothed in ragged garments, and his nephew had a very plausible excuse for his pretence. He had forgotten all his pious promises, and had plunged into many disorders. The parochial revenues, which he had agreed to distribute among the poor he had spent in luxurious living; he had filled his stables with thoroughbred horses, and now kept a pack of hounds. He had industriously circulated a report of his uncle's death, and pretended to have letters giving a detailed account of his last moments, and on the strength of these letters he had been appointed parish priest by the Archbishop. Feeling secure of his position he had turned the priest's house, once

the abode of piety and holiness, into a resort for hunters and gamblers.

When Blessed Gonzalvo presented himself at the presbytery door he was rudely turned away like a common beggar. He humbly begged alms from the servants, but the dogs in the yard set upon him, bit him, and tore his clothes. He sent a message to his nephew, who went to the door and treated him as an impostor. The holy man could not restrain his tears and cried out, "Is this the effect of the care I took of your education? Is this the use you make of the church revenues I gave into your care? Is this the charity you show to the poor of Christ I so earnestly recommended to you?" His unnatural nephew became more furious on hearing these reproaches, threw himself on his uncle, snatched his pilgrim's staff out of his hand, dealt him several blows with it, set his dogs at him again, and left him to be torn to pieces. But the servants, more compassionate than their master, saved his life by calling the dogs away.

Covered with blood, Gonzalvo sought refuge in a house near at hand, where he dressed his

wounds. He did not make himself known to any of his former flock. Many doubtless would have recognized him. Fourteen years of fervent meditation in the scenes of our Divine Lord's passion had taught him patience, and he blessed God for deeming him worthy of imitating him so closely in suffering and shame. So he prayed for his nephew's conversion, and determined to embrace the life of a hermit in order to imitate the solitude, penance, and prayer of his Divine Master.

He soon found a suitable place at Amaranthe, a wild and unfrequented district where there is now a town of considerable population. Here he built a little cell and a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary; occupied himself in pious reading, meditation, and manual labor. He passed the night in chanting the divine office, and early in the morning celebrated the Holy Mass.

Desiring not to separate the labor of the Apostolate from the sweetness of contemplation he went among the people to instruct the young and ignorant. The success which crowned his efforts caused him to be regarded as a saint; his hermitage became a place of

pious resort, which many visited to secure his prayers or to be instructed in piety and the way of salvation. Alms were given him in such abundance that he was able to bestow much on the poor. Yet this life, holy and useful as it was, did not wholly satisfy the longings of his heart, and he often begged God that if, after having renounced the world and all its hollow pleasures, a still more perfect life was possible mercifully to make it known to him. Prayer and fasting were the principal means he employed to learn God's holy will. During the forty days of Lent he ate and drank nothing but bread and water. On the night before Palm Sunday he was praying very earnestly at the Altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the Divine Mother appeared to him, in the midst of dazzling brightness, and told him she wished him to abandon his present way of life, and enter into that religious order in which it was the custom to begin the office by the Angelic salutation—*Ave Maria, gratia plena*, “Hail Mary, full of grace;” told him that the order was very dear to her, and under her especial protection, and that he would end his days in it.

Joyfully he began to visit the neighboring monasteries to find the Order the Blessed Virgin desired him to enter. After a search of several months he arrived at the town of Guimaraens. He was very tired, for he had been all day on foot, and went to seek an asylum at an hospital near the town gates. This hospital was under the spiritual care of some Fathers of the order recently instituted by Saint Dominic. Although it was not a regular Monastery they followed all the monastic observances exactly the same as if living in the strictest community.

Their modest behavior, spirit of recollection, and their fervent zeal greatly impressed Blessed Gonzalvo, and it was with the greatest impatience that he waited to hear them commence the recitation of the divine office. Behold! the first words they uttered were *Ave Maria gratia plena*, the words he so longed to hear. One can understand his joy. This was the order the Queen of Heaven loved so much, this the habit he was to wear until death, this the holy rule he was to follow.

Next morning, he saw the Prior, Blessed Peter Gonzalez, and narrating his vision asked

and obtained the habit of the sons of Mary and Dominic.

The community soon learned what a treasure God had given them in the Novice-priest, and they rejoiced all the more when they were told how holy had been his life, and what he had done for God. After he had taken his vows, remembering the good he had accomplished at Amaranthe, his superior sent him, accompanied by a fellow-Dominican, to dwell again in his old hermitage.

As soon as it became known that he had returned and resumed his apostolic work of preaching, a greater crowd than before flocked to hear him, and when he went to preach a mission many were not content unless they accompanied him. Houses began to spring up all around the hermitage, and what had before been a desert became a town, built on both sides of the river Tamage. In some places the river was exceedingly rapid, especially in winter when it was dangerous to cross it. In attempting the passage some were drowned, and those who had built houses on the side opposite his hermitage were unable to avail themselves of his spiritual services in winter

time. He resolved to construct a bridge. It is said that an angel appeared to him and showed him the place, immediately opposite his little chapel. At that spot the water was exceedingly rapid, and every one said it was impossible to erect piers. He did not hesitate, and although old age was creeping on him, began the necessary works. As soon as the people saw that he had commenced, they became enthusiastic about the project. Some cut down timber, others obtained stone, and those who had money contributed towards the laborer's wages. God blessed their charity and zeal. In spite of many difficulties the bridge was built. He himself seemed supernaturally endowed with strength, so heavy were the stones he carried on his shoulders.

One day when he was collecting money for this object he encountered a gentleman whom he tried to interest in the good work. He met with a refusal ; but the gentleman finally referred him to his wife, giving him a letter of introduction, assuring him that she would contribute to the good work. This was only a ruse ; in the letter he told his wife to give as much money as would balance the weight of

the paper on which he wrote. The lady smiled when she read the letter, and told Gonzalvo that it was only a polite refusal. Blessed Gonzalvo, much astonished, begged her to obey her husband's wishes, and see how much the letter would weigh. When it was placed on the scales, coin after coin became necessary to balance it, and thus he carried away a considerable amount.

There being no pure water at hand the holy man, like a second Moses, struck a rock with his staff, and a fountain sprang forth, which supplied all the workmen with an abundance of sweet water. The pilgrims who now go to his tomb drink this water from devotion, and miracles have frequently been granted to them in reward of their piety.

The supply of wine having also failed, Gonzalvo struck the same rock on the other side ; it opened in an instant, and a stream of wine began to flow ; but it soon ceased, except at meal times. Some of the peasants living in the neighborhood heard of this wonderful miracle, and ran with as many bottles as they could carry to take a supply of wine home with them. But God intended that the wine

should only be for the necessities of those laboring in the good work of building the bridge, so they were disappointed in not obtaining any. As soon as the bridge was completed the miraculous supply of wine ceased entirely.

When provisions failed the holy man knelt on the river bank, made the sign of the cross over the water, and commanded the fishes to come to him. They obeyed. As many as he needed he took, gave his blessing to the others and sent them away.

During all the time it took to build the bridge he contented himself with preaching on Sundays and feast-days. But as soon as it was finished he resumed his daily preaching and with blessings still more abundant than formerly. Learning that several bad catholics laughed at excommunication, he wished to explain its nature and effects to the people, and as he had to treat with the simple and uneducated he chose to do so by a striking example. He pronounced the words of excommunication over some loaves of white bread a woman passing by carried in a basket, and in a moment they became as black as

coal; then to teach that the church never rejects penitent sinners but restores them to their former state upon their repentance, he removed the excommunication and immediately the loaves became as white as they were before. Thus he spent his days in instructing the ignorant and exhorting sinners to repentance, again and again returning to his beloved retreat at Amaranthe to prepare himself anew for fresh labors.

The day of his death was revealed to him. He was seized with a fever which confined him to bed. As soon as his illness became known crowds ran to receive his last blessing and to recommend themselves to his prayers. The charity which had always burned so brightly in his heart gave him strength to overcome the weakness of his body, and his death-bed became a pulpit from which he preached to those who came around him.

When the people expressed their heartfelt sorrow at his approaching death he told them that it would separate his body only from them, and that he would always be present with them in spirit, and would be of more use

to them in heaven than he had been while on earth.

He received the last sacraments of God's holy church with touching dispositions, after which he was favored with a heavenly visit from the Blessed Virgin, and hosts of the Blessed. God's holy mother sweetly invited him to enjoy the reward her Divine Son had prepared for him. He received the invitation with transports of joy, during which he gave his soul into the hands of his Creator and in the company of the Saints and their glorious Queen went to heaven. It was the tenth day of January, 1259. He had passed seventy-two years on earth.

In all the neighboring villages a voice was heard calling the people to his funeral. They ran to his hermitage, bathed his holy body with their tears, and after reciting the office of the dead, buried it under the Altar of his own little chapel.

Pilgrimages to his tomb began at once. So universal was the opinion of his eternal happiness, and so absolute the conviction that he had at once entered heaven, that the people had recourse to his prayers in all their necessities.

When any one fell sick he was at once carried to the tomb of Blessed Gonzalvo ; in all their bodily and spiritual wants they turned to him, and their confidence was not misplaced, for many and remarkable were the answers to their simple and confiding prayers.

Father Sampeyo, who lived in the sixteenth century and who wrote his life, declares in his preface that he himself was miraculously cured of a deadly sickness by the blessed man, and assures us that in his time the Portuguese made pilgrimages to his tomb with the same trust and devotion as they had in the intercession of St. James patron of Spain.

The number of miracles wrought by Blessed Gonzalvo is very great, and there is no sickness which he has not cured. A long list is given by the Bollandists. One miracle deserves mention. In the year 1400 when the waters of the river Tamega rose to an unexampled height, the astonished inhabitants beheld Blessed Gonzalvo appear over the rushing flood, carefully guiding the branches of trees washed down by the flood through the arches of the bridge he had built, which would other-

wise have been broken down by the force of the shock against the piers.

So many miracles at length led the Dominican Order to petition the King of Portugal, John III., to give the care of the chapel at Amaranthe into their own hands. He consented, 1540. He also built a monastery for the Fathers near the chapel. He and several of his successors warmly solicited the Holy See to canonize Gonzalvo. Pope Pius IV. allowed the Dominican Fathers and secular clergy in all Portuguese possessions to celebrate Mass and to say office in his honor. Clement X., at the request of the Portuguese Ambassador and the Master-General of the Dominican Order, Father John Thomas Rocaberti, extended this privilege to the whole Dominican Order.

Prayer.

Antiphon. O Gonzalvo, admirable confessor of Christ, unwearied preacher of the Truth, graciously intercede for us who sing thy praises, and help us, O Father, with thy loving prayers at the throne of the eternal Majesty.

Pray for us, O Blessed Gonzalvo.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst wonderfully inflame the mind of Blessed Gonzalvo, Thy Confessor, with the love of Thy holy name, grant we beseech Thee that treading in his footsteps we may ever think on Thee and with fervent zeal ask those things that are agreeable to Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED ANDREW OF PESCHIERA

BLESSED ANDREW OF PESCHIERA.

JANUARY 9.

THE lives of some of the saints are crowded with dramatic incidents while others are almost devoid of ordinary human interest, the perfection of virtue to which man aided by God's grace can attain, being the sum of their lives on earth ; but from every saint we can learn some holy lesson or impress some sterling truth on our minds by reading the record of their lives.

In the life of Blessed Andrew of Peschiera there is little of merely human interest to chronicle ; yet it teaches us the golden truth that a man who devotes all the faculties of his mind and the energies of his soul to the good of his fellow men, is precious in the sight of God, and that great beyond conception will be his reward.

Andrew Grego was born at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Peschiera, a village on

the borders of the lake of Gardo, in the north of Italy was his birthplace. His parents were poor, pious and edifying in their life. As a proof of the truth of the saying that "the child is father of the man" little Andrew was a saintly boy, and many there were who foretold that his after life would be remarkable for holiness.

At a very early age he imitated the saints in their self-denial and habits of prayer. He did not care to join children of his own age in their simple amusements, but chose to go aside to pray in silence and solitude. At meals he contented himself with the coarsest and commonest food. He fasted the whole Lenten season on bread and water, a custom he continued until death. As he grew older the beauty of his features, and the spiritual beauty of his soul increased. The world offered him many seducing pleasures; he spurned them all to give his heart entirely to God. A very advantageous marriage was offered him; he declined it, for he had already determined to live in perfect chastity.

His father died, confiding the care of the family to him. His brothers ill-treated him,

and frequently forced him to sleep in the open air. He bore their ill-treatment meekly, never complained, or showed any resentment. His pious mother, who loved him tenderly, pitied him but was powerless to protect him from his brothers' cruelty.

At length he became conscious of a divine vocation to enter the Dominican order, and having obtained his mother's blessing he started for Brescia, where he hoped to find an entrance into the order. His brothers accompanied him to the city gates to say farewell. When the time of parting came, forgetting their unkindness, he knelt down before them, and humbly besought them to bless him, and gave them his stick, the only thing he had taken with him from his father's house. It was preserved, and in after times became gifted with miraculous power.

He was received into the order at Brescia, and from thence sent to study in the famous monastery of Saint Mark in Florence.

It was at the time Blessed Andrew da Chiesa was forming a congregation in which the rule of the order was observed in its original strictness, and which was afterwards erected

into a province. Trained in this school of sanctity he became very perfect, being especially remarkable for his spirit of obedience. He never failed in this virtue, and was often heard to say that to be obedient is the same as to be a saint. He was no less admirable in his studies, and like all true Dominicans loved exceedingly to study the Scriptures.

Raised to the dignity of the priesthood, all on fire with love for God, consumed with desire to save souls, Blessed Andrew commenced to preach and immediately became remarkable for his success in combating error and vice. Obedience soon made known to him the future scene of his apostolic labors. Several of his Dominican brethren were sent under the leadership of Father Dominic of Pisa to evangelize the Valtelina, a fertile valley enclosed by the Alps and watered by the river Adda. Two centuries before Saint Dominic had preached throughout this valley. It had now become a prey to the Manichean heresy, and needed such men as the little band of holy Fathers who accepted the invitation of Benigno Medici to rescue the people from eternal loss.

Blessed Andrew was one of the Fathers chosen for this labor by the Dominican superiors. He gave himself to it heart and soul. He devoted himself to the poor, visited their homes, often passing the night under the roof of their humble cottages, sharing their frugal repasts of coarse bread, chestnuts, and water and sleeping on branches of trees. Regarded as a saint, he obtained great influence over the people; one word from him was sufficient to quell those popular tumults which the passions of men stir up from time to time. All disputes were referred to him and his decision was always obeyed.

Heretics bowed their proud wills, and abandoned their false doctrines before his teaching, overcome more by the sweet charity and irresistible charm of sanctity than by arguments. Every one loved this holy priest so austere to himself, but so mild towards others. Every one called him a saint, "the father of the poor."

Nor were miracles wanting to bear additional testimony to the truth of the religion he preached, to heighten the opinion of his sanctity. One day as he was disputing with

some heretics, a volume was given him ; it was full of errors against the Catholic faith especially against devotion to the saints. When he opened it, lo ! a deadly viper escaped from its leaves as if to testify to the poison of its false doctrines.

Like a prudent workman in the vineyard of the Lord, Blessed Andrew made provision for the future of the people confided to his charge. Knowing the weakness of men, their natural proneness to fall into sin and to embrace errors, he built many churches, founded new parishes, established several monasteries in the Valtelina. Among these was the renowned Dominican Monastery of Morbegno which he filled with zealous and learned priests to act as a perpetual rampart against the insidious advances of heresy and vice. This monastery was his favorite home, and when fatigued from his apostolic journeys he retired there to obtain the rest and repose he so much needed.

Never could he be induced to accept any office in the order. He cherished in his heart a very tender devotion to the passion of our Divine Lord, wore every Friday a crown of

sharp thorns on his head concealed under the Capuce or hood of his religious habit. He is represented in ancient pictures with a crucifix in his hand, which is supposed to have reference to some miraculous favor received by him from God.

He dwelt in the Valtelina more than forty-five years evangelizing the people, travelling from place in spite of the heavy snows, until having learned of his approaching death by Divine revelation, he returned to the Monastery of Morbegno, where receiving the last sacraments he resigned his holy soul into the hands of his Maker, January 18, 1485.

His body, which sent forth a sweet perfume, was buried without special ceremony, nor was any monument erected over his tomb, until several miracles having been wrought, his relics were solemnly transferred, in the year 1497, to the Chapel of Saint Roche, and placed in a costly tomb. Over the altar was painted a picture of the Saint surrounded by rays of light, and bearing the following inscription :

“ Pray for us, Blessed Andrew of Peschiera.”

A century and a half later, in the year 1630, the plague broke out in the Valtelina. The magistrates of Morbegno made a vow in the name of the inhabitants to pay the expense of translating the relics of Blessed Andrew to a still more beautiful shrine. The plague entirely ceased, and in grateful fulfilment of this vow the Bishop carried the relics around the town, which was richly decorated for the occasion, after which they were again deposited in the Dominican Church. His cultus was approved by Pope Pius VII. in the year 1820.

Prayer.

Ant. This saint is worthy to be had in remembrance by men for he hath now passed to the joy of the angels.

V. Pray for us O Blessed Andrew.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst adorn Blessed Andrew, Thy Confessor, with the Apostolic spirit, grant that in imitation of him,

our words and example may be so profitable
that we may bear abundant fruit thereby.
Who livest and reignest God world without
end. Amen.

SAINT RAYMUND OF PENNAFORTE,
THIRD MASTER-GENERAL OF THE
ORDER OF FRIAR PREACHERS.

SAINT RAYMUND OF PENNAFORTE,
THIRD MASTER-GENERAL OF THE
ORDER OF FRIAR PREACHERS.

JANUARY 23.

LIKE many of the Dominican saints Saint Raymund is as widely known for his learning as for his sanctity. The four characteristic marks of the true Dominican; devotion to the Blessed Virgin, consummate holiness, elevated learning, and burning zeal for the salvation of souls are to be found in him in perfection.

He was born, 1175, in his father's castle of Pennaforte, a few miles from Barcelona, a city of Catalonia, in Spain. The castle was built on rocks which rise from the waters of the river Monjos. A Dominican monastery, built in 1601, on the site of the castle, still remains, but with the exception of one tower the castle has gone forever. Saint Raymund's family was noble, even royal, being allied to the race of the kings of Aragon. From his infancy he

was blessed by God. "Although in years a child his heart was that of an old man," says one ancient author. It was a pious custom in those days for Catholic parents to dedicate one or more of their children to God's service in some monastery or cathedral, leaving them full liberty to choose, when old enough to do so, either the ecclesiastical state or to return to the world. Thus a double advantage was gained. The church obtained ministers, formed from youth in the ecclesiastical spirit and well grounded in christian virtues, and in many cases received the wealth which would have been their fortune in life. Acting in the spirit of faith Saint Raymund's parents dedicated him to God in his earliest years, and sent him to Barcelona to be placed among the youths in the cathedral school.

In the deserted monastery of Saint Dominic at Pennaforte may yet be seen two paintings. In one Saint Raymund is represented as a boy of six or seven years, listening to his father. His mother stands behind him and seems to be uniting her exhortations to those of her husband. The other picture represents him at twelve or thirteen years of age, clothed in

clerical dress. His father tenderly blesses him, as he bends down and kisses his hand; while his mother stands aside, weeping silent tears of joy. An angel, in the costume of a traveller, touches the young cleric on his shoulder, and appears to be urging his departure. In the background is a Moorish servant, holding a beautiful horse by the bridle, ready for the journey. This picture evidently represents young Raymund's departure from the home of his ancestors for the studious cloisters of the cathedral of Barcelona.

In that home of piety and knowledge the youth learnt to despise the vain and hollow pleasures of this world, and to value that heavenly wisdom which is alone learned at the foot of the cross. He received the seed of sound Catholic doctrine in good and fertile soil. His progress in learning was so great that when only twenty years old he began to teach the liberal arts. (1196.) His disinterestedness was such that his lectures were free of charge. His holy life edified all who were so happy as to know him, and his pious example was as eloquent as his teaching. Eight years were passed in this way. We find Ray-

mund in 1204 arbitrating in a case submitted to the decision of the Bishop of Barcelona. Herein was found the first indication of his aptitude for Canon Law, or law of the church, in those days almost as universal as civil law ; men of the highest talent and reputation glorying in possessing a knowledge of ecclesiastical as well as civil jurisprudence.

The universities of Paris and Bologna were attracting students from all parts of the christian world at that time. Yielding to the common impulse Raymund gave up his classes, and leaving his native land for the love of knowledge set out for Bologna. He was not alone on his journey. A cleric, Peter Ruber, who afterwards entered the Dominican order, accompanied him. The two travellers following the ancient Roman road from Spain to Italy, which passed through Arles and Turin, arrived one day at Briançon, at the foot of Mount Genève. There they heard of a great miracle which had just taken place in a village called Saint Mary of Elbeza, a little distance from the road. Shortly before their arrival a young man on a pious pilgrimage to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin in Albeza, was attacked

by his deadly enemies. They cut off his hands, and in their ferocious hate gouged out his eyes. He continued on his pilgrimage, having an additional motive to lead him as a suppliant to Mary's feet. The young man's mother hurried to the shrine, to join her prayers to his for a complete cure. She passed the whole night in prayer at the feet of the Mother of God. The "comforter of the afflicted," who was never known to turn a deaf ear to a sincere prayer, granted what she asked. The bloody sockets were suddenly filled anew with eyes, and hands began to form themselves in place of those so barbarously cut off. Saint Raymund saw these eyes and the hands which were not yet completely formed. Many years later he wrote an account of what he saw, in a letter, addressed to John of Vercelli, Master-General of the Dominican order, beginning thus: "I, Brother Raymund of Pennaforte, the least of the order of Preachers, in the present year, 1271, and the 18th of August, have written the present account at the wish of my brothers, and for the honor of the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord, Saviour and Redeemer

Jesus Christ." It happened, he says, sixty years before, which would make the date of their journey 1210. This letter is to be found in the edition of the "Summa" of Saint Raymund, printed at Verona.

With his heart full of love for Mary, Saint Raymund continued his journey and in due time arrived in Bologna. He was now thirty-five years old. He concealed his talents and fame, and set himself to acquire a full knowledge of those branches of science of which he was as yet destitute. It was by no means unusual in those times for men of his age and reputation to become pupils at the great European universities. Thus we are told that when later on he began to teach in Bologna "the principal nobles and literati went in crowds to his lectures." Bologna was then at the height of its glory, and had as many as ten thousand students.

Saint Raymund paid special attention to the study of law, civil and ecclesiastical, excelling in both, and after six years spent in perfecting himself, and having taken the degree of Doctor of those sciences he began a second time to lecture, and again with great success.

In Bologna, as in Barcelona, his lectures were free to all. The senate of Bologna, having been told of his disinterested conduct donated a large sum to him every year, wishing to keep him in the city. Saint Raymund accepted the money but only that he might increase the abundant alms he distributed. When he had been teaching three years, Beranger de Palon, Bishop of Barcelona, returning from Rome to his diocese, passed through Bologna. He heard nothing spoken of but the new order of Preachers, which Dominic Guzman, a noble Spaniard, had founded, and the extraordinary fame of Raymund, a professor from his own diocese. Charmed with the holy lives of the Dominican Fathers, and thinking of the needs of his flock, the Bishop obtained some of them to found a monastery in Barcelona, and at the same time persuaded Raymund to return with him.

To establish the Dominicans, the Bishop, on his return to Barcelona, gave the ground on which the famous monastery of Saint Catherine the Martyr was built, provided a supply of wine, and made a present of a Bible with marginal notes ; the latter a princely gift in those

days. Authentic documents which are still extant, give us the history of the foundation of this monastery ; when the church was commenced and finished, when the various chapels were erected, the dormitory, chapter room, hospice or infirmary, and all the various parts of a house of regular observance. Alas! nothing now remains but the memory of this beautiful monastery and church, which despite their architectral beauty could find no favor in the eyes of the revolutionists of 1835, who utterly destroyed them.

On his arrival in Barcelona in 1219, Raymund met with universal respect and admiration. The cathedral canons consented to the bishop's wish that he should become one of their number. But all the honors so freely bestowed upon him only made him more humble, and caused him to lead a more retired life. His fervent devotion to the Blessed Mother of God inspired him to institute a more solemn celebration of the feast of the Annunciation, for which he always paid the expenses. But if he allowed his devotion to Mary to become known by this act of piety, he strove to hide his virtues from the knowl-

edge of the busy world. Yet all in vain. None who knew him could fail to admire his modesty, his charity, mortification, fervor and regularity in attendance at the divine office in the cathedral choir. He inspired such confidence in his impartiality and justice that many asked him to act as arbitrator in difficult disputes; and the archives of the cathedral of Barcelona still preserve an agreement made by his advice between two canons of the cathedral who referred a dispute which had arisen to his decision.

Not content, however, with the means of sanctification the state of a secular priest afforded him, Raymund now began to long for a more perfect life. The holy and apostolic life of the sons of Saint Dominic in Bologna and Barcelona, no doubt had greatly impressed him, and caused him to wish to join them. We remember that while Saint Raymund was teaching in Bologna the disciples of Saint Dominic were preaching there, and that by the sweet charm of their holy lives no less than by their eloquence, they had stirred up the whole city. The new order founded by Saint Dominic, confirmed in 1215 by Pope

Innocent III., had already obtained a solid foundation, and made rapid progress. In 1218 Saint Dominic sent John of Navarre, one of his first sixteen disciples, Brother Bertrand, and Brother Richard to Bologna, and after a little time Michael de Uzero and Dominic of Segovia, and lastly the famous Blessed Reginald of Orleans, who soon captured the city by his fervid eloquence. Day after day he gained new disciples; Brother Clair, Roland of Cremona, Brother Moneta, numbers of jurists and philosophers gave way before the force of his eloquence. Then came the holy patriarch Dominic. He arrived in Bologna in August of 1219. Bologna was to become the centre of his apostolic work, the favorite city of his heart, the place of his death, and the custodian of his relics. Vocations followed in rapid succession; John the Teuton, Blessed Sadoc, St. Peter Martyr of Verona, and many others entered the order there. Among the professors who became Dominicans in Bologna were Paul of Hungary, the first Dominican Provincial of that country, also Martin Fano, who born in a palace, gave up his high rank to devote himself to teaching, and after he

had entered the order refused a Bishopric, and died in the reputation of sanctity, and John of Vincenza, a famous preacher of the order, who finding the churches too small for his immense audiences preached in the open air.

Although we find no mention of any meeting between Saint Raymund and Saint Dominic in Bologna, yet as we know that Bishop Palon persuaded Saint Raymund to return to Barcelona at the same time that he obtained from Saint Dominic some of his disciples to found a monastery in Barcelona, we may feel sure that these two saints must have met at that time.

“The Brothers having been established a short time,” says an ancient author, “Raymund considered their holy life and the fruits of a ministry which the Lord had made fertile. He, likewise, desired to walk in the footsteps of Him, Who, being rich, embraced poverty for our sake, and Who gave Himself for the salvation of souls. Wisely laughing at the world’s seductions, he turned a cold shoulder on unstable advantages, and on Good Friday entered among the Friar Preachers.” This was in 1222, a few months after the death of

Saint Dominic. He was forty-seven years of age.

An interesting relic of Saint Raymund remained in Barcelona at the beginning of this century. On the road leading to the house of the Gruny family, who were always benefactors to the Dominicans in Barcelona, was a large stone on which it is said Saint Raymund rested when on his way to the Dominican Monastery; doubtless to calm himself and to brace himself up for the sacrifice he was about to make.

His example induced many learned clerics and nobles to receive the Dominican habit. His advanced age and noble birth seemed to be an impediment to his carrying out the rule of an order which obliged its members to silence, severe penance, and rigid self-denial. The great doctor of canon law, for whose presence two cities had contended, the arbitrator of difficult disputes, the pride of the learned chapter of the cathedral, appeared all at once in the humble habit of a Friar Preacher, a novice learning in true humility the way of the spiritual life with the docility of a little child.

O how beautiful is the life of a Dominican religious who is filled with the spirit of his order! From morning till evening it is a series of holy acts; small perhaps in themselves, but great in virtue of their dedication to the service of God. In his little cell, so still and calm, even though it be in the heart of a great city, all his thoughts are turned to God, and directed towards the salvation of souls. His nights are spent in prayer, and his days passed in study and apostolic labor.

Let us endeavor to learn how Saint Raymund spent his time at Saint Catharine's Monastery in Barcelona.

It is the recreation after the evening meal. Night draws near. The sound of the church bell rings through the air to call the community to Complin; that of all parts of the daily office the most beautiful. The Fathers rise and go through the cloisters in silence to the choir. Complin having been recited the "Salve Regina" is sung in solemn procession, after which all retire to rest. In the middle of the night the bell again calls the community to prayer. All arise, pass through the dark and silent cloisters to the choir where they

chant the office, and again retire to rest. Only a short sleep is allowed them, for early in the morning they are all in the choir for meditation, the community Mass, and another part of the Divine office. The morning is spent in labors of various kinds. The Fathers study the Holy Scriptures and prepare their sermons, or each one attends to the duties of his office; the novices study, or attend lectures on Holy Scriptures, Philosophy, and Theology; while the Lay Brothers labor in different parts of the monastery, cooking, washing, gardening and the like.

Dinner of fish and vegetables is served in the refectory at noon. All are seated, hooded and silent, in a row at each side of the apartment, while one novice slowly and distinctly reads from some pious book at a lectern; so that while the body and its forces are strengthened with needful food, the soul may be refreshed with sound doctrine and maxims of Catholic piety. The afternoon is spent in much the same way as the morning; and Complin coming round again completes the happy day.

This was the life, pious, calm, and peaceable

which Saint Raymund embraced when he entered the Dominican order. But his biographers have left us some charming details of his personal life. They tell us that he was often awakened from sleep by an angel at time for Matins, that he said the Divine office, one of the chief duties of a religious of the ancient monastic orders, very devoutly, and whether he said it in choir or elsewhere always said it with the same devotion, the same pauses, and bodily inclinations. They tell us he was very careful also to avoid interruptions, and everything in the way of distraction. We learn from them that he spent much time in prayer after Complin and again after Matins. Many of the Fathers were accustomed to go into the church or cloisters at those times to take the discipline, or to pray in silence and recollection. Saint Raymund always made a visit to every altar in the church, prostrating himself before each, and frequently chastising his body with disciplines. Sometimes his sorrow for his sins was so great that his groaning could be heard by the whole community. His biographers tell us that his abstemiousness in eating and drinking was very remarkable,

even in a monastery of strict observance. Except on Sundays he took but one meal a day. In recreation time his conversation was pious and edifying. Never would he allow the absent to be criticised or unfavorably mentioned in his hearing, and he took great pains to defend any one whose conduct was attacked. He confessed his sins every morning before saying Mass. He once said that if anything took place to hinder his saying Mass he felt unhappy the whole day. A column of fire descended from heaven one day when he said Mass. It enveloped his head and shoulders and lasted from the consecration until he had consumed the host.

He did not hide his talents in the cloister. He studied assiduously, and gave all his free time to the careful study of Holy Scripture; and he, the eminent canonist of European reputation, did not disdain to attend the courses of lectures given in the monastery by professors of less renown than himself. When any one consulted him on obscure points of canon law, or on any case of conscience, instead of trusting to his own opinions he searched the works of authors of weight to

find if his private opinion was warranted by authority. But when he had come to a decision, founded on sound reasons and supported by standard authors, he gave his opinion with such firmness and confidence that they who had consulted him felt safe in following his advice.

On entering the order his first care had been to beg his superiors to impose a severe penance on him that he might make some satisfaction to God for the sins of his youth. In answer to this request the Provincial of Spain, Father Suero Gomez, commanded him to make a collection of cases of conscience, for the guidance of confessors. The work he wrote in obedience to this command is called the "*Summa of Saint Raymund*," and is believed to have been the first of its kind.

Instead of finding obscurity in the cloister, as he wished, his fame increased every day; and among those who learnt to value his advice and direction was James I., King of Aragon, who chose him for his confessor, and profited by his wisdom in carrying out a glorious design inspired by God. It was the institution of the Order for the Redemption of Captives. For

many years the Moors, all zealous Mahometans, and fierce enemies of the Christian religion, had held possession of many Spanish provinces. Much of the coast line was under their baneful power, and woe to the Christian who fell into their hands. No cruelty was spared to force him to deny his religion, and every inducement held out to lead him to apostatize. Every day news came to the Catholic cities of barbarous torments the Christians had to suffer from the ferocious disciples of Mahomet.

On the night of the first of August Saint Raymund was praying for those who had fallen into the hands of the Turks, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and told him she desired that a religious order should be founded devoted to the work of redeeming Christian captives from the Moors. The Queen of Heaven appeared the same night to King James for the same purpose, and also to a holy Frenchman, Saint Peter Nolasco, who for several years had labored with great zeal and devotion in this good work. Saint Peter Nolasco belonged to one of the first families of Languedoc. He was born in the year 1189, in

the village of Mas-le-Saintes-Puelles, between Toulouse and Carcassonne, in the south of France. Saddened by the sight of the ravages made by heresy he left his native country for Spain, and served some time under the banner of Simon de Montfort; and when Peter, King of Aragon, confided the care of his son, afterwards King James the First, to Simon de Montfort, Simon appointed Peter Nolasco the young Prince's Governor. Peter taught him to love God with all his heart, to value justice aright, in a word to be a truly Christian Prince. He himself lived a very holy life at court. He spent four hours in prayer every day, and two every night. He read the Holy Scriptures assiduously, and did much penance. But when again and again, tidings came of the sufferings inflicted on the unhappy Christians who fell into the power of the Moors, he resolved to devote his whole fortune to their ransom. What was his delight then, as he was preparing to carry out his pious resolution, to be favored with a vision of the Mother of God, who told him that it was God's holy will that he should establish a religious order for this grand work,

Fearing to be deceived he hastened to consult his spiritual director, Saint Raymund, and told him of his vision. His delight was increased when he learned that Saint Raymund had also received the same command from the Blessed Virgin. Raymund proposed that they should go to the king to ask his assistance for the great work. When admitted to the king's presence, to their great joy and surprise they learned that he likewise had received the same command from the same heavenly lips, and none of them could any longer doubt that the visions were from God.

About thirty years previous several Catalonian gentlemen had formed themselves into a confraternity for ransoming Christians from the Saracens, attending hospitals, visiting prisoners, and guarding the sea-coast against infidel invaders. Nearly all the members of this confraternity and the priests attached to it joined the new order. The Order of the Redemption of Captives was solemnly instituted in the cathedral of Barcelona, August 10, 1223. King James, his whole court, and the city Magistrates were present. The Bishop of Barcelona officiated, and Saint Raymund

preached, and in his sermon narrated his vision. After preaching he went to the altar, and taking a habit, which had been prepared, presented it to King James and the bishop, who taking the front of the scapular, Saint Raymund holding the other end, Saint Peter Nolasco was by them invested with the habit of the new order of our Lady of Redemption. The habit consisted of a white tunic, scapular, and mantle. On the scapular was the arms of the Kings of Aragon. Saint Peter then gave the habit to thirteen members of the confraternity, six priests and seven chevaliers. In addition to the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, a fourth was added, to devote themselves to the work of the redemption of captives. The rule of the order was compiled by Saint Raymund, and was based on the rule of Saint Augustine and the Dominican Constitutions. The king gave Saint Peter Nolasco the hospital of Saint Eulalia for the first monastery of the order, and several nobles assisted him with donations to endow it. The order thus founded was formally approved by Gregory IX. in 1235, under the name of "The Order of our Lady of Redemption,"

About this time Gregory IX. sent John Halgrin, called John of Abbeville, Benedictine Abbott of Besançon and Cardinal of Santa Sabina, into Spain as legate, to obtain the observance of some decrees of the Council of Lateran, to preach a crusade against the Moors, and to investigate the validity of the marriage of King James of Aragon with Eleanora of Castile, entered into when he was only thirteen years of age, when although they were related in the degrees forbidden by the church no dispensation had been obtained for the marriage. Arriving at Barcelona it was not long before the legate heard of the learned Father Raymund, the Dominican Friar. He at once consulted him on the object of his legation, and being so pleased with him, ordered him to accompany him on his journey. Saint Raymund, by the legate's wish, assisted at the Council of Tarragona, in which the king's marriage was declared to be null; and he afterwards accompanied him on his mission to organize the crusade, when he fully justified his reputation for holiness and wisdom. He strictly observed all the fasts and days of abstinence of his order on his journeys,

and as far as he could observed every monastic rule. He went in advance of the legate, on foot, with a fellow religious given to him as a companion, begging food and lodging as he went along. He prepared the people to gain the indulgence of the crusade, and the Apostolic blessing of the Pope's envoy; and succeeded so well that the legate found nothing left for him to do, and thus the end of the mission was obtained.

When the Cardinal was about to return to Rome he was sincerely grieved to part with Raymund, so charmed had he been with him, and desired to take him to Rome with him. But the humble Friar Preacher excused himself, and the Cardinal feared to push his request further. But he could not refrain from making known to the Pope the great services rendered him by Saint Raymund. Gregory at once sent for him, and soon found that his worth had not been exaggerated. He made him his own confessor, and Grand Penitentiary of the Roman Church, an office which at the present day is held by none but a Cardinal. In his office of confessor Raymund gave the Pope for a penance an obedience to expedite all

matters relating to the poor ; and when Gregory found that he could not discharge all those duties in person he made Saint Raymund his agent in all such matters, appointing him, as Blessed Humbert de Romanis tells us, “ Expeditor of the causes of the Poor.” He also commanded him to make a collection of all the decretals of his predecessors in the chair of Saint Peter, and to write an explanation of the most difficult. Three years were spent in this enormous work, and when completed the Pope was so pleased with it that he ordered its exclusive use.

It was during his residence in Rome that Saint Raymund from zeal for the preservation of the true faith, procured the establishment of the Inquisition in the kingdom of Aragon. For a long time the Albigensian heretics, flying from justice in Languedoc, had taken refuge in Aragon and Catalonia, where they attempted to propagate their pernicious errors.

Gregory the Ninth nominated Saint Raymund to the Archbishopric of Tarragona, as a public acknowledgment of his talents, and the services he had rendered the church ; but with tears in his eyes Raymund begged his re-

lease, recommending for that office William de Mongrin, of Gerona, a virtuous ecclesiastic. At first the Pope was inexorable in maintaining his nomination, but when the saint sickened from grief he reluctantly revoked it. Raymund also refused the Archbishopric of Braga in Portugal, and several other exalted dignities ; saying always that it was a sufficient dignity for him to be a good religious in the order he had entered.

After five years in Rome in the service of the church and in most responsible and fatiguing duties without having diminished his penances and austerities, he felt that his strength was failing, and his physician declared that he must return to his native land. The Pope gave his consent, but on condition that he retained his office of Grand Penitentiary.

After a pleasant voyage Saint Raymund landed at Tossa, a small Spanish port about thirty-six miles from Barcelona. He was accompanied by four Dominican Friars, who thus became witnesses of a remarkable miracle. A peasant, called Barcolo, working in the harvest field, was suddenly struck by apoplexy,

deprived of the use of speech, and became quite insensible. At the sight of the unfortunate man Saint Raymund thought of his soul and began to pray, begging all around to join him in his prayers that he might recover sufficiently to make his confession before he died. After several moments the saint arose, and approached the man. "Barcolo," he said to him, "do you desire to confess?" The dying man opened his eyes, and distinctly answered, "Yes, I do, and have much desired it." Saint Raymund heard his confession, but hardly had he absolved him than he lost his voice again. The other Fathers approached and saw him die quietly and calmly, amid universal gratitude to God for the grace He had granted this poor man in answer to Saint Raymund's prayers.

In the Bull of his canonization we find the following account of a miraculous grace granted to his merits, evidently about this time. A lay brother, before his entrance into the order had led a very licentious life. The remembrance of the sins of his youth frequently raised most annoying images of unlawful pleasures in his mind. One day as he was assisting at St. Raymund's mass he sent up a

fervent prayer to God to deliver him from these temptations. At the consecration he saw in the host a beautiful child, enveloped in light, and at the same moment all the evil desires vanished never again to return, and he felt a delicious calm penetrate his senses. Another lay brother, called Martin, had suffered continual headache for more than two years, and could not bear the least noise. He went one day to Saint Raymund and entreated him to lay his hands on his head and cure him. Saint Raymund did so; the headaches ceased at once and forever. A lady, of the name of Elisende Eymerich, had for a long time been afflicted with a quartan fever. Saint Raymund, accompanied by Brother William Pons, paid her a visit. The sick woman had great confidence in Saint Raymund, and asked him to restore her to health. He pretended not to understand her, too humble to allow any one to think him a saint. But she persisted until he gave way and cured her.

At home once more in his beloved monastery at Barcelona he soon recovered his health. He kept the rule as strictly as before, prayed and studied incessantly, and most conscien-

tiously observed the silence commanded by the Dominican constitutions. But he soon found that even in his monastery he could not live the retired and secluded life he loved so much. His renown was so great that he was consulted on matters of all kinds by all classes of men. Kind and affable to all he solved every difficulty submitted to his judgment, and was much sought after. He found that his office of Grand Penitentiary absorbed too much of his time, and wrote to the Pope to be released from its duties; alleging as a reason that the facility with which he could be approached diminished the respect due to the Holy See. But to preserve and increase the brotherly love which existed between the Franciscan and Dominican orders he asked to be allowed to retain his office so far as concerned the two orders. About this time he wrote a work on pastoral visits by desire of the Arragonese Bishops, and another, in answer to the request of several merchants, on the lawfulness of certain business practises. He also assisted at two celebrated national assemblies, at Moncon, in 1236, and at Tarra-gona the year following.

Saint Raymund loved the quiet and peaceful seclusion of his beloved monastery ; it was for this he had left the world and the honors it showered upon him. It was the same holy longing for monastic rest that had caused him to return from Rome. But God's providence was again to call him forth into public life. The sad news of the death by shipwreck of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, the immediate successor to Saint Dominic in the government of the order, having become known, a General Chapter assembled in Bologna, May 28, 1238. On this grave occasion the fathers of the chapter gathered round the tomb of Saint Dominic, praying him to make known to them him whom God had chosen in His wisdom to be his successor. An ancient author gives the following account of the election of Saint Raymund to the office of Master-General of the order.

“When Brother Jordan of happy memory, the second master of the order of Friar Preachers and the successor of Saint Dominic, had passed from this world to a better life, the Brothers were called to Bologna to choose a Father and Pastor, and to celebrate the Gen-

eral Chapter. According to the custom and law of the order their sessions commenced on Whitmonday. After they had devoutly invoked the Holy Ghost, the religious of the Lombardese Province and those who had come from other Provinces accompanied the Electors with great marks of deference to the hall prepared for the election. The electors having been locked up, the other Brothers returned to the church, where they sent forth fervent prayers to obtain from God a fitting pastor. They were to be seen in the choir, and especially at the tomb of our holy father Saint Dominic; some weeping, others sending ardent sighs to heaven; others like doves, groaned within themselves; all were recollected in prayer.

“Now a very devout brother kneeling near the tomb of our Blessed Father, the hand of the Lord having touched him, he there saw in a vision the electors coming forth in a body from the hall where they had been confined. Having come to the church they seemed to join in adoring a marble pillar, sweating, from base to summit, with little drops of blood, and inasmuch as this pillar rested on the pavement

and arose to the vault it appeared to support the building. Seeing this the brothers and many secular persons present made their joy heard and gave thanks to God for the erection of so precious and beautiful a pillar. The vision then faded away. Soon after, in about the time necessary for saying one nocturn of the divine office, the electors came out of the cenacle, called the religious to chapter, and announced to them that Brother Raymund, of Pennafort, had been elected Master of the order, without any debate and unanimously. Great was the joy of the Brothers to whom God had given a Father so holy, and so universally venerated; still greater was the joy of the students, who applauded the election of so learned a master and one so justly appreciated. It was remarked that on this day, by a coincidence in no way foreseen, that the reader in the refectory lit upon this text of Joel, "And you, O children of Sion, rejoice, and be joyful in the Lord your God, because He hath given you a teacher of justice. (Joel, Cap. iii., v. 23.) Truly this man was a pillar of marble very precious, elevated in the midst of the church, and empurpled with a bloody

sweat. These words are faithful and true. An eye witness related them, and this witness is Brother Stephen de Salagnac, of Limoges."

This narrative of a contemporary is taken from documents collected in the fourteenth century by Cardinal Rosell, a Dominican, which was produced on the occasion of the canonization of Saint Raymund. A copy has been preserved in the Archives of the congregation of Rites.

St. Raymund was not present at the chapter. The Fathers, who well knew his modesty and unfeigned humility, feared greatly that he would decline the honor. They therefore sent a deputation to Barcelona to announce his election to him, and to beg him to accept the office. They were Hugh of Saint Cher, Provincial of France, afterwards Cardinal, and well known for his Commentaries on Holy Scripture; Pontius de Sparra, Provincial of Provence; Philip, Provincial of Syria; Stephen, Provincial of Lombardy, and several others. When told of his election it drew tears from his eyes, but fearing to resist God's holy will he accepted.

He governed the order two years, during

which time he made admirable laws and rearranged the Constitutions of the order, dividing them into two parts. The first part contains regulations for the religious conduct of the Fathers and Brothers ; the second has reference to exterior occupations, the various community officials, etc. On his journeys to make visitations he always went on foot. When it became necessary to correct or reprimand any religious he did it in the kindest way, and by his charity and kindness won all hearts.

After two years of hard work for the good of his brethren in the order he convoked a General Chapter to meet at Bologna, 1240, in which he resigned his office, pleading his great age, seventy, as his reason. At first all the Fathers refused to accept his resignation, but when he implored them to listen to his request they gave way. This caused such sorrow and indignation in the order, that in the General Chapter of 1241 a law was passed, that for the future the resignation of the Master-General should not be accepted, unless he was entirely unable to perform the duties of his office. And in the next General Chapter of 1242 it was declared that those Provincials

who had accepted Saint Raymund's resignation should be deprived of their office. Freed from the burden of government he returned to Barcelona. He lived nearly thirty years longer, persevering in the holy and penitential life he had led from the day he had taken the habit. His old age was as fruitful in labors as his vigorous youth. He was a son of Saint Dominic who had instituted his order for the salvation of souls, and his heart was as full of zeal for the salvation of all: Moors, Jews and heretics. At his suggestion the Kings of Castile and Aragon founded two monasteries with colleges attached to them, for the study of Hebrew and Arabic; one at Murcia, the other at Tunis, and a number of Dominican Fathers were sent to Tunis to labor for the conversion of the misguided people. Writing to Blessed Humbert de Romanis, General of the order, he tells him of the immense number of conversions among the Moors and Turks by the religious of those two monasteries. It was also at his request that the Angelic Doctor, Saint Thomas Aquinas, the glory of the Dominican order for all ages, wrote his immortal work against the

same false religion, entitled the "Summa contra Gentiles."

Honors were bestowed on Saint Raymund in rapid succession. Popes gave him offices which appeared to belong to none but themselves; such as the nomination of bishops, examination of the causes of prelates, with power to depose, absolve or excommunicate them, to dispense with irregularities, and such like. Saint Raymund most strenuously opposed the elevation of Dominicans to the episcopate, and he requested Popes never to raise any of them to the dignity of prelates. The Bishop of Barcelona, Beranger de Palon, ordered that the executors of his last will should take no steps whatever to carry it out without first consulting Saint Raymund, and obtaining his approbation for all they did. King James I. of Aragon always consulted him in every important state business. He sent him to Rome to treat with Urban the Fourth on several national matters; and on his return was so satisfied that he chose him for his confessor and director, and took him with him to Majorca to obtain the conversion of the Moors of that island. Like so many

kings, James had allowed his evil passions to master him. In sincere attachment to the church, and in unfeigned assent to her doctrines, this prince was worthy of admiration; but lust had enslaved him, and he took the miserable partner of his crime with him to Majorca on this occasion. Saint Raymund boldly reprov'd him several times, and bade him dismiss the miserable creature. But when he saw that all his remonstrances were useless he told the king that he could remain with him no longer. James, who in spite of his sinful conduct really loved the saint, and knew that he could ill afford to lose his sage advice, forbade him on pain of death to return to Barcelona without his permission. Saint Raymund said to his companion, a Dominican Father, "You will soon see that the King of heaven will confound the wickedness of this earthly king, and provide me with a ship." He went to the sea-shore, took off his cappa, or black cloak, and spread part of it on the water, while he fastened the other part to his staff, like a sail to a miniature mast. Then he fearlessly knelt down on that part which floated on the water, and invited his companion to do

the same. This Father's faith, however, was not so strong, and he declined to do so. Saint Raymund bade him farewell, and charged him to recommend him to the good will of the Prior and community of the monastery of Majorca. Making the sign of the cross he pushed off from land, and quickly sailed away on his cloak. Swift as an arrow he shot past the port which was filled with ships. Some sailors, who had refused him a passage, saw him sailing away, and set up a great shout of astonishment. The king was told of the miracle and hastened to the shore, where from a ship he saw the saint, now already at a distance, swiftly sailing away. He was so touched by this wonderful miracle that he repented of his sin, and began to lead a chaste and holy life. Saint Raymund sailed along even more rapidly than if he was on board the swiftest vessel. He made one hundred and eighty miles in six hours. On nearing Barcelona the people who happened to be near the shore, noticed the frail vessel, and at first thought it was a stray spar from some shipwreck. But when it came nearer what was their astonishment to behold a man, robed in

white, kneeling on a cloak spread on the surface of the waves, sailing along in perfect safety! Hearing their exclamations of astonishment a crowd quickly assembled. Every one ran to see the wonder. They soon recognized their fellow-citizen, the holy Dominican Friar, Father Raymund, of Pennaforte. On reaching the shore he stepped on land, and put his cloak round his shoulders; it was as dry as if it had never touched the water. When he came to the monastery the gates opened of themselves to allow the saint to enter. In memory of this astounding miracle a tower and chapel were built on the spot where Saint Raymund landed.

Six years after this, the saint, whose life had become one long infirmity, on account of his fasting and the austerity of his habits, felt his strength rapidly failing. Some time before this he had petitioned Pope Clement IV. not to burden him any longer with public duties, and his wish having been granted he passed all his time in preparation for death. When his end came near he was visited by the King of Castile, Alphonsus the Wise, and by James the Conqueror, King of Aragon. They had

loved and honored him as a Father, and now came to beg his blessing for the last time. They could not withhold their tears as the holy old man raised his emaciated hand to beg for them the blessing of Heaven. Having received all the sacraments of the church, with a devotion which profoundly moved his fellow religious, Saint Raymund calmly and sweetly died. It was seven in the morning of the feast of the Epiphany, 1275. He was ninety-nine years of age.

His funeral was attended by the Kings of Aragon and Castile, attended by their whole courts. He was buried in the Dominican church of Saint Catherine the Martyr, in Barcelona. Numerous miracles set the seal on his sanctity. His body was translated into a magnificent tomb, one hundred and five years after his burial. It was opened by command of Clement the Eighth in 1596, when the dust taken from it was sent to all parts of the earth ; and although a large quantity was thus carried away it was noticed that it never diminished.

Saint Raymund was beatified by Pope Paul V. and canonized by Clement VIII. "The

feast of Saint Raymund," says Tournon at the end of the life of this saint, "was at first kept on the seventh of January, but was afterwards fixed for January 23, by a bull of Clement X. We will not speak here," he continues, "of the great number of miracles with which God seems to have taken pleasure in making known the glory of His servant, or of his credit in heaven in favor of those who have recourse to his prayers, Bollandus has filled fifteen pages with them. But the glory of his heavenly virtues and great deeds, the writings full of light and learning which he has left us, that odor of sanctity he spread among the secular clergy and in the cloister, the example of charity and firmness to all the ministers of the sacrament of penance, the number and worth of those who, formed by him and following in his footsteps, have made the monastery of Barcelona a seminary of saintly and learned men, always ready to announce to the people the truths of salvation and to defend Catholic doctrine against the enemies of the faith—all this is not less glorious to Saint Raymund's memory than miracles."

Prayer.

Ant. Lead us forth, O Lord, through Raymund's loving prayers, from the house of the bondage of sin into the liberty of the glory of Thy sons.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Raymund.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst choose Blessed Raymund for a glorious minister of the sacrament of penance, and didst guide him wonderfully across the waves of the sea, grant that through his intercession we may bring forth worthy fruits of penance, and at length reach the haven of salvation, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED MARCOLINO OF FORLI.

BLESSED MARCOLINO OF FORLI.

JANUARY 24.

IN the year 1397 a Dominican Father, eighty years of age, died in his monastery at Forli in Romagna. When his brethren in the order gathered around his yet warm body, a child of exquisite beauty but unknown to every one, and believed to have been an angel in human form, was seen going through the streets of the town, and heard to cry aloud everywhere, "Go quickly to the Dominican Monastery, Father Marcolino is dead." Among those who heard the child was a woman bedridden for thirty years, who full of belief in Father Marcolino's sanctity, exclaimed, "O my God, if it is true as I believe it to be, that you have called away Father Marcolino to heaven, give me back my health," and while she yet spoke she was suddenly and miraculously cured.

The people ran in crowds to the monastery

—all hoping to obtain something to treasure as a precious relic. It was not possible to bury him that day, according to the custom of the order. The crowd was so great the Fathers were obliged to defer the funeral until nightfall, and when the people had dispersed, and the doors of the church were closed, the remains were consigned to the Monastery Crypt. Next morning the people finding the holy body removed went to the vault and carried it again to the church. A sweet odor confirmed the universal opinion that he whose earthly body lay there, was already enjoying the happiness of heaven. As long as the body lay in the church it was continually surrounded by the faithful. His habit was cut to pieces and had to be replaced no less than three times. The hope of obtaining a miracle by his intercession was their object, and their piety did not go unrewarded. So many miracles took place that when an inquiry was made into the proofs of his sanctity the ecclesiastical notaries attested that they had taken evidence of no less than eighty, among which was the resurrection of a dead person to life.

These wonders were regarded as testimony from heaven to the Father's sanctity, and led every one to call him a Saint. And yet the annals of his life contain little of what is remarkable. His was a quiet life passed in holiness, hidden in God. No extraordinary events diversified its even tenor. Except by the eye of the Creator it was unnoticed, and it was only when it had ceased in death that it became known how fair it had been, and how perfectly on earth this hidden soul had fulfilled his mission.

His sanctity, which is Blessed Marcolino's sole title to our admiration and reverence, may be summed up in few words; he was a perfect religious. Wanting in nothing that is contained in holiness, he passed his life in the monasteries of his order, content to be known to God alone. Although a priest we read nothing of his apostolic labors in the scanty records we possess of his life.

Some few intimations of the beauty of his soul, a few dates and ordinary events, are all that is recorded, and yet he is held up for our admiration and proposed as a model for our pious imitation.

Marcolino Amanni was born in Forli, a little town in Romagna. He came of a remarkably pious family. He entered a Dominican monastery in his native town when he was ten years of age. In the novitiate he made solid progress in the way of perfection, and soon began to be regarded as a model of sanctity, although so young in years and in the religious life. He observed the rule of the order to the letter, and in its most minute details, never accepting any dispensation. Throughout his whole life he kept a perpetual fast, even in extreme old age. He allowed himself little sleep, seated in a chair or resting on a bare board. Religious poverty, obedience, and chastity he observed with rare fidelity. Humility, the touchstone of true sanctity, filled his heart and influenced all his actions. It caused him to hide the spiritual graces bestowed on him by God, and led him to seek the lowest place, to associate frequently with the Lay Brothers, and to undertake the humblest labors in the monastery. He was always calm, modest and exceedingly recollected. Very sparing with words, but ever ready with kind and charitable deeds; attentive to the wants of

every one, especially to those of humble degree.

But his love for prayer and contemplation was what distinguished him from his fellow religious. His life was spent in prayer and sweet communings with God. His knees became hardened and covered with scales, as was attested after his death. When he prayed he became absorbed in God, losing the use of his senses, but it was noticed that when the bell was rung at the elevation in the Mass, he returned to himself at once, and ran in haste to adore his Divine Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament. He seemed, when at prayer, as as if asleep, but it was the sleep of which the spouse in the Cantic speaks, when she says, "I sleep, but my heart watches." In contemplation his soul lost itself in the immensity of God. He fell into ecstasy at all times and in all places; sometimes in the refectory, but most frequently at the altar during the celebration of Holy Mass, which he always celebrated in tears. The people often wondered how the Father could sleep during so holy an action, but those who knew him could testify that it was no sleep but a most

sweet communing with God which filled his whole being with holy rapture. It often became necessary to call him to take his meals: he forgot bodily wants when he became absorbed in God.

He was remarkable for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The only property he had was a little statue of the Blessed Virgin. In his great simplicity he often spoke to it; and tradition tells us that it frequently answered him. After his death it was carefully preserved as a precious relic.

He loved the poor tenderly and gave them all in his power to dispose of. Above all, he delighted in the society of little children. He frequently prophesied, and knew the secrets of hearts.

He wrought several miracles. An inhabitant of Forli, dangerously wounded on his head bethought himself of the Blessed Priest, and earnestly recommended himself to his prayers. Blessed Marcolino appeared to him in a vision during the following night, touched his wound several times, after which he disappeared and the wounded man found himself cured. Another time a mother who had lost her son and

had heard nothing of him for three days, begged Blessed Marcolino to recommend him to God. He promised he would do so, and while he prayed it was revealed to him that the unfortunate youth had been cruelly murdered, and his body thrown into a ditch, where it lay hidden covered by branches of trees. He told the disconsolate mother who found the body in the very place he described.

Blessed Marcolino was actively engaged in the work of reformation in the Dominican Order which the ravages of the Black Pest in 1348 had rendered so necessary. Blessed Raymund of Capua, the Master-General of the order, employed him in this difficult work, which required as much prudence as zeal. Before his death, he had the happiness to see the desired reform accomplished.

He died in the year 1397. Sixty years afterwards the Bishop of Recanati, a native of Forli, caused his holy body to be raised from the grave and placed in a beautiful marble tomb. It was found incorrupt. Miracles continuing in great numbers, Benedict XIV. approved his cultus in the year 1750, and

allowed the clergy of Forli and the Dominicans to celebrate his feast.

Ant. " Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will set thee over many things.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Marcolino.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, to whom the prayer of the humble and meek hath always been pleasing, grant that we may profit by the prayers and example of Blessed Marcolino, that becoming truly meek and humble of heart we may the more readily receive Thy gifts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED BERNARD SCAMMACCA

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FEBRUARY 9.

BLESSED BERNARD SCAMMACCA was born in the beginning of the fifteenth century at Catania, a city situated at the foot of the volcano of Mount Etna in Sicily.

He had the good fortune to receive a truly christian education, for he came of parents as pious as they were noble. But when he began to grow up he forgot the religious teaching he had received in his youth, and let himself be drawn away from the path of piety by the seductions of society, letting loose the rein to all his evil passions. Yet although he blindly plunged into every sinful amusement and pleasure, the mercy of God regarded him with pity. Struck by the hand of God, like another Saint Paul, he arose to become a vase of election for the glory of God and for an example to His people. He received a serious wound and was forced, for a time at least, to interrupt

the course of his disorderly life. During the long days and sleepless nights to which his accident condemned him, he began to reflect on the evil state of his soul. He saw the danger he was in. The pious lessons of his childhood came back to his mind, and suddenly moved by divine grace, strong and sweet, he felt a better will arise in his soul, and resolved to give himself unreservedly to God by entering a religious order. Restored to health he lost no time in carrying out his holy intention. He did not feel content with merely endeavoring to avoid sin, like so many who are converted from wickedness, but with generous ardor he aspired to the perfect life, and without delay humbly asked to be allowed to enter as a novice in the Dominican Monastery in Catania. His petition was duly granted and the habit conferred upon him. It was soon seen that his conversion was genuine, and so solid that it led him to love with his whole heart the austere life of the order he had chosen. Emulating the virtues of the most perfect among the religious of the monastery he soon began to excel them. He was remarkable for true obedience, sweetness of

character and manners, but especially for his unfeigned humility.

Like the thirty years of the human life of our Divine Lord in the holy house of Nazareth, his life passed away almost unrecorded. He lived and died a good religious ; said Mass, preached, heard confessions ; in a word fulfilled the holy duties of his state of life in a holy manner. But when we reflect on his conversion to God in his youth we can conceive how zealous he was for the conversion of sinners, and what pains he took to lead them to a better life. The mercy God had shown him taught him to be patient with those, who, although they had wandered away from God, earnestly sought to be reconciled to Him.

A man of prayer, Blessed Bernard was so filled with love for God, and so deeply penetrated with gratitude to Him, that he was almost continually in profound contemplation. He gave full play to the ardor of his love, and often retired into the quiet monastery garden, which he found conducive to prayer. No sooner had he begun to commune with his Creator, than the birds flew around him, perching on his hands and shoulders. And the

sweet sounds of their songs reminded him of the joyous melodies of heaven and the songs of the saints around the throne of God. The birds hushed their voices as his blessed soul, leaving his mortal frame, became united to God in deep contemplation. They remained near him until returning to himself again he gave them his blessing, upon which they flew away.

He once fell into an ecstasy, when a religious going to speak to him, found him kneeling in prayer before a crucifix, his body raised from the ground. Another night Blessed Bernard was called out of the monastery on an errand of charity. The brother porter, going to his door and rapping at it received no answer. But seeing a bright light streaming out of a chink in the door, he peeped in and saw Blessed Bernard holding an open book in his hand, ravished in ecstasy, and near him he saw a beautiful child, holding a flaming torch, which emitted a brilliant light. Surprised at what he saw the good brother ran to the Prior's cell, to tell him what was taking place. The Prior called the whole community to show them so extraordinary a sight, and to

make known to them what favors God in His goodness, bestows on truly humble and penitent souls.

God granted everything Blessed Bernard prayed for, and to aid him in his efforts to save souls gave him the gift of prophecy. He went one day to the residence of the President of Catania to warn him that his son was in danger of assassination. The president was at dinner when Blessed Bernard asked to see him. Waiting until the dinner was over, Blessed Bernard began to pray, and fell into an ecstasy, and it was with great difficulty that the president's servant could restore him to himself. "It is quite useless," he said, "there is no longer any need to speak to him," and he went away without any explanation except that the young man would die that evening, which came to pass.

A lady who was unceasingly pursued by a libertine, asked Blessed Bernard to protect her against his evil designs. One day soon after as he was on a journey with a fellow Dominican, he suddenly began to pray, then ceased for a moment, sighed heavily and said, "Brother! let us return to our monastery.

God is about to punish that wicked man for his obstinacy." Three days afterwards the libertine died an impenitent and unprovided death.

Prayer to God and charity towards his fellow creatures occupied Blessed Bernard's whole life. Like St. Paul, while he preached to others he feared that he himself was a cast-away, and imitated that great penitent in his bodily mortification. He never forgot the sins of his youth, and strove to redeem the criminal pleasures he had wallowed in, by severe penances. He wore an iron chain round his waist, and frequently took the discipline.

Nothing more remains to be told of him except that he died in the year 1486.

As soon as it was known in Catania that he was dead a crowd gathered at the monastery to venerate his body, for all deemed him a saint, and all were desirous to obtain a share in his intercession with God.

Fifteen years after his death Blessed Bernard appeared to the Prior of the monastery, and told him to translate his body from the place where he had been buried, and to place it in the Rosary chapel. The Prior obeyed,

and it was found incorrupt. Many miracles took place during this translation. One paralytic having touched the holy body was cured in sight of all the people.

During the ceremonies the church bells rang of themselves. The Count of Montegialino hearing them suspected the fathers of a pious fraud. "Let us go and see the new saint the Dominicans have found among themselves," he scornfully said; but when he tried to mount his horse, he fell and wounded his leg. The wound mortified, and the physician fearing gangrene refused to attend him. But as soon as he repented of his incredulity and prayed to Blessed Bernard to take pity on his sad state, he was immediately cured.

These and other wonderful miracles caused very great devotion to Blessed Bernard, and one nobleman resolved to steal his body and keep it in his own castle. One night the saint appeared to several of the community in the dormitory, and warned them that thieves were stealing his body. They ran to the church just in time to find a number of armed men, who had opened the tomb, and had carried the sacred relics as far as the church door; there

they became so heavy that they could move them no farther. When they saw the Fathers they fled, and the relics became light again, and were carried back to their place in the Rosary chapel.

His cultus was confirmed and approved by Pope Leo XII. in 1825.

Prayer.

Ant. Blessed is this saint who trusted in the Lord ; he preached the commandment of the Lord, and is now established upon His holy mountain.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Bernard.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst mercifully bring back Blessed Bernard from the vices of the world and didst lead him into the way of perfection, grant through his merits and intercession that we may likewise bewail our sins and turn with pure minds unto Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED REGINALD OF ORLEANS.

BLESSED REGINALD OF ORLEANS.

FEBRUARY 12.

THE memory of Blessed Reginald has always been held dear by all who love the Dominican Order, for it was to him that the Blessed Virgin first gave the white scapular, the distinctive part of the Dominican habit.

He was born about the end of the twelfth century; but neither the year of his birth, nor the town in which he was born is known. He was certainly a native of France. Some of his biographers say that he came into this world at Saint Gilles, a small town near Arles, on account of which he is often called Reginald of Saint Gilles; but others say that it was at Orleans.

He went to study at the University of Paris about the year 1193, and gained the degree of Doctor of Canon Law in 1206, when he was about thirty years of age. He lectured on Canon Law in Paris for five years, after which

his renown for learning and piety having become known to the canons of Saint Aignan in Orleans, they chose him for their Dean. This was about 1212, for his name as Dean is found in a deed made in that year. The canons of Saint Aignan lived under the rule of Saint Augustine, and had always been remarkable for learning. They lived in community, and being immediately subject to the Holy See, were exempt from Episcopal jurisdiction. The kings of France had loaded them with honors and gifts. They possessed ample revenues, and enjoyed the patronage of many rich church benefices. Thus we see what an important and honorable office was conferred on Blessed Reginald and we learn in what esteem he must have been held since the canons were induced to elect him their superior.

On his arrival in Orleans he found the chapter in confusion. The canons had opposed the late dean, and he had led them into litigation with the bishop. In a few weeks, by moderation and a spirit of reconciliation, Reginald had restored harmony to the chapter, and made peace with the bishop, with whom he became so fast a friend that one writer says,

"These two were so strictly united that one would think the dean was the bishop and the bishop the dean." The duties of his office and the quasi-monastic life led by the canons would have satisfied the aspirations of hearts less noble or less pious than his. But he, in the greatness of his love for God, was not content. The voice of his Divine Master seemed ever to be whispering in his ears, 'The harvest is great but the laborers are few.' The thought of so many souls wandering away from God, oftentimes for the lack of a guide to show them the way of truth, was ever in his mind. In the fulness of his manhood, as well as in his youth, he had always dreamed of the apostolate, and had yearned to spend his life in laboring for the salvation of souls in some religious order, vowed to penance, prayer and preaching. But could such an order be found?

While he was thus unsettled in his mind the Bishop of Orleans invited him to accompany him on a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land. Reginald readily agreed, and they set out early in the year 1218. They arrived in Rome about Easter. While in the Eternal

City Reginald became the friend of a Cardinal, to whom he opened his heart and made known to him the state of his soul and its aspirations. He told him of his longing to give up all for Christ's sake, and being poor in deed as in heart to go about preaching the gospel to the poor. The Cardinal answered that in the newly founded order of Friar Preachers he would find all he desired, and told him that the founder of the order, Dominic Guzman, famous already for his holiness and miracles, was in Rome preaching daily to large crowds of people. As soon as Reginald heard this he ran to find Saint Dominic, and soon fell under our most holy Father's influence, attracted by his sanctity and charmed by his conversation and preaching; and finding in the new order all he desired he determined to enter its ranks.

But before he could carry out his intention he fell sick of a fever, which brought him to the verge of death. When Saint Dominic heard of it he was afraid he would lose a disciple in whom he had placed great hopes of increasing his infant order; and he began to pray very earnestly to the Blessed Virgin to spare Reginald's life. She heard his prayers;

for as Reginald was lying on his bed of sickness, momentarily expecting death, the Blessed Mother of God appeared before his eyes. She was accompanied by two beautiful maidens, one holding a vase of precious perfumes, while the other carried a long white scapular in her hands. The Queen of Heaven drew near him and said, "Ask of me what you wish and I will grant it." But when Reginald hesitated, one of the two saints told him to leave it to the Blessed Virgin to give what she chose, to which he willingly agreed. Then the holy mother of God taking the vase of heavenly oil, anointed him on the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, feet and loins, saying a prayer for each, as is the custom of the church in administering the sacrament of Extreme Unction. All the words she said have not been recorded, but when she anointed his feet she said, "Let thy feet be shod for the preaching of the gospel of peace;" and when she anointed his reins she said, "Let thy reins be girt with the girdle of chastity." Then taking the white scapular from the hands of the attendant saint she gave it to him, saying, "Behold the habit of thy order." Immediately afterwards the

vision faded away. He was cured. Thus did she who healed the sins of mankind cure her servant in his need.

Saint Dominic saw all this while in prayer, and the next morning went to visit Reginald, and found him in perfect health. Three days later this vision was repeated in the presence of Saint Dominic and a monk of the order of Hospitallers of Saint John. The holy virgin anointed Blessed Reginald anew, and a second time gave him the white scapular. From that time no immodest temptations troubled him, and he felt not the least sting of the flesh which could draw his mind away from God. Saint Dominic having been a Canon of Saint Augustine in the Cathedral of Osma, and having adopted the rule of that Saint for his order, had till then worn the habit of an Augustinian Canon: a white tunic, and white linen surplice. But, says Bernard Gui, after this heavenly vision, and the showing of the scapular Brother Dominic and his Brethren took off their surplice and put on the white scapular, retaining the cloak and tunic which heretofore they had worn as Regular Canons. "Blessed are those," says Thierry of Apoldia,

“who have been found worthy to be clothed with this habit, symbol of a threefold grace, and woven by the strong woman for the guests of her house.”

Having recovered his health by a miracle Reginald made his profession in the Dominican Order, and then went to the Holy Land to fulfil his vow, leaving Rome in May, arriving in Sicily in October of the same year. In Sicily he founded a monastery at Agosta, near Syracuse. In the garden of that monastery there is still to be seen the withered trunk of a cyprus, from which there exhales a pleasant perfume. It is held in great veneration; and the sick, especially those attacked by fever, go to it to obtain health. More than one miraculous cure has rewarded their faith. It is held for certain that this tree, of which only the trunk now remains, was a staff given by Saint Dominic to Reginald at starting on his pilgrimage, and which Reginald planted in the ground when he arrived at Agosta, and which took root and blossomed. To this day it is called Saint Dominic's tree.

After satisfying his devotion at the shrines of the Holy Land Reginald returned to Rome.

Saint Dominic being about to visit Spain appointed him his vicar in his absence from Italy, and sent him to the newly founded monastery of the order at Bologna. Reginald arrived in that city December 21, 1218. The Brothers, who had been sent there in the previous spring, were living in the direst poverty. Saint Dominic visiting them on his way to Spain found them without bread, and renewed the miracle he had worked in Saint Sixtus in Rome. At his prayer two angels appeared in the refectory and served the brothers with bread of marvellous whiteness and exquisite taste. Taking farewell he comforted them by telling them that he would send them help in their need. He alluded to Reginald, their new vicar, who as soon as he arrived in Bologna began to preach and quickly gained a hearing for the little community unknown till then. His fiery eloquence soon set the city in a ferment. Every one ran to hear the new Paul; in one week Reginald was the most remarkable man in Bologna. Ecclesiastics of all ranks, professors and students of the university soon entered an order which hitherto had been unknown, or if known despised.

So numerous were the sudden and unlooked-for conquests of Reginald's persuasive voice that many were afraid to go to listen to him for fear of being led to give up the world and join the Dominican Order. Among them was a certain Master, or Professor, of the University, called Moneta. In the "*Vitæ Fratrum*" Father Gerard de Frachet gives us an account of his vocation.

"When Blessed Reginald, of holy memory, formerly Dean of Orleans, was fervently preaching in Bologna, and attracting many clerics and professors, Master Moneta, at that time lecturing in arts, who was famous in all Lombardy, having witnessed the conversion of many began to fear much lest he too should be caught by Reginald's words; for which cause, as far as lay in him, he dissuaded all his scholars by word of mouth, and by his own example, from going to his preaching. But on Saint Stephen's day, when his scholars invited their professor to the sermon, as he could not excuse himself, neither on account of his lecture nor for any other reason, he said to them, 'Let us first go to Saint Proculus to hear Mass.' They went and heard not only

one Mass but three. This he did to pass away the time, so that it would be too late to go to the sermon. On their insisting he said, 'Let us now go to the sermon.' They went, therefore, and found Reginald already preaching, and the nave of the church so full that they could not enter. Standing at the church doors and listening he was caught at the first words. 'Behold,' said Reginald, 'I see the heavens are now open. Every one who wishes can enter by the open doors. May the unhappy, negligent souls see and fear lest God should close His heart, mouth, hands, and the Kingdom of Heaven so that they cannot enter. Why do you delay, O beloved? Behold the heavens are opened!'

"After the sermon the aforesaid professor went to Reginald, touched by the word of God, and declared his state and occupations, and made his profession to him; but because he was hindered in many ways, he remained for a year and over by Reginald's permission in the secular habit; yet not unprofitably, for as he had formerly turned away many by his words, so afterwards he led many, not only to hear Reginald's sermons but also to enter the

order. He took them to the sermon, and led now one now another into the order, and seemed to renew his own profession with each one. Having himself entered the order it is not easy to describe how holy he was in word and doctrine, and how he excelled in refuting heresy." (*Vitæ Fratrum. Pars 4, Cap. 10.*)

Blessed Reginald received as many as one hundred into the order in the short space of six months, and his sermons drew such a crowd to hear him that he was frequently obliged to preach in the squares and streets. The Dominican Fathers had no church of their own in Bologna. On their first arrival the Benedictines of Saint Proculus gave them permission to say the divine office in that church. Some time afterwards the Spanish regular canons of Roncevaux gave them asylum in their hospice, and the charge of the church of Saint Mary of Mascarella. Like their Divine Master they had no place whereon to lay their heads, and were dependent on the charity of strangers. But in the spring of 1219, through the influence of Cardinal Ugo-lino, Papal Legate, they obtained the church of Saint Nicolas of the Vines, outside the city

walls, the parish priest of that church entering the order. A monastery was soon built, and the Fathers had a home of their own. But before they entered it a great difficulty arose. The noble family of Andalo, one of the most powerful in the north of Italy, possessed the right of patronage over the church of Saint Nicolas, and the head of the family steadily refused to cede it to the Dominicans. The same family owned the land round the church and obstinately declined to sell it. But God, who often allows those who labor for Him to be harassed with difficulties in the beginning of their enterprise, also graciously smoothens the way when all hope seems to be lost. Diana, a daughter of this noble house of Andalo, charmed by Blessed Reginald's eloquence, came to their aid, and persuaded her kinsfolk to sell the land and donate their rights to the struggling community of Friars. She entered the second order of Dominican Sisters, lived and died holily, and her name having always been held in religious veneration, the process of her beatification is now before the Holy See.

Successful in his endeavors to establish the

community of Bologna on a solid footing, Blessed Reginald was no less so in the government of the Friars, and in his efforts to lead them to a high degree of sanctity, both by example and by his loving exhortations. First and foremost he upheld the strict observance of the Dominican rule and constitutions. Let us hear Father Gerard de Frachet :

“It happened at Bologna that when a certain Brother had received some coarse cloth without permission, and it having come to the knowledge of Blessed Reginald, of happy memory, he gave the Brother a severe discipline in the Chapter, and burnt the cloth in the cloister publicly before all. But when the said Brother did not acknowledge his fault, nor wished to humble himself to receive the discipline, but rather murmured, the man of God told the Brothers to prepare him by force for the discipline. Which having been done Reginald, his eyes turned towards Heaven, said with tears, ‘O Lord Jesus Christ who didst grant to Thy servant Benedict the power to drive the devil from the heart of one of his monks, grant I beseech Thee that by the virtue of the discipline the temptation may be

expelled from the soul of this Brother.' He therefore gave him a discipline so great that the Brothers were affected to tears. But the weeping Brother arising said, 'I thank you, Father, for you have truly expelled the devil from me. I distinctly felt a serpent go out of my reins.' And continuing in these holy dispositions he became a very good and humble Brother."

Gerard de Frachet continues thus, "A certain Brother, at Bologna, tempted to leave the order and caught when he was going out of the monastery, was led to the chapter before Blessed Reginald, and acknowledged his fault. Blessed Reginald told him to prepare for the discipline. He disciplined him severely, and striking him forcibly he said three times, 'Come out of him, O demon!' Then turning to the Brothers he said, 'Let us pray, Brothers, that by the discipline and prayer the devil may fly from his heart.' When he had prayed a long time the Brother cried out, 'Listen to me, Father,' who answering, 'What do you say, my son?' the Brother said, 'I assure you that the devil has gone out of me, and I promise to persevere.' Which having heard the Brothers

were glad, giving thanks to God; and the Brother, confirmed in his vocation, remained in the order." (*Vitæ Fratrum*, Pars. IV. Cap. 2.)

It was thus that the love of a true father and zeal for monastic discipline led Reginald to practise a severity, which will be condemned no doubt by those who love pleasure more than their soul's welfare, but which all true Christians and lovers of the cross can readily understand. Sometimes, however, although encouraged and sustained in their vocation by Reginald's lofty spirit, the Brothers were subjected to many trials and doubts about their vocation. At one time a tide of spiritual discouragement threatened to engulf them. Gerard de Frachet recounts what passed on Ash Wednesday, 1219. "In the times" he says, "when the order of Preachers was like a young flock and like a young plant, in the monastery of Bologna a movement of temptation arose among the Brothers, which so cast them down with fear, that many of them conferred among themselves as to which religious order they could transfer themselves, fearing that the Dominican order, an institution, new

and as yet but little established, would come to naught. This was the cause of such an excitement that some of the principal Brothers, to wit, Brothers Theobald of Sienna, and Nicolas Campanus, thinking that they could not continue in the order obtained permission to pass to a Cistercian monastery, from Ugo, Bishop of Ostia, at that time Legate of the Holy See, and afterwards Gregory IX. ; which letters of permission they presented to Master Reginald. He called the Brothers together, and very sad and grieving, made known to them the whole affair ; and the aforesaid commotion began to increase. While Master Reginald raised his eyes to heaven, and spoke in his heart to God in whom was his whole hope, Brother Clair (a good and learned man, who had taught all the liberal arts while in the world, and was skilled in canon law and civil law, a man of great authority, and afterwards Prior Provincial in the Roman Province, and Penitentiary and Chaplain to the Pope), began to speak to the Brothers, and in many ways and by many reasons to comfort them."

"Hardly had he ended speaking when behold ! Master Roland, of Cremona, who was

Regent of studies in Bologna, whose fame for physics was spread through the whole of Lombardy, who later on was the first among the (Dominican) Brothers to teach in Paris, transported by the Spirit of God, fleeing from the world, and carrying with him only a scarlet dress with which he was clothed, came all alone to the Brothers, and knocked at the door, and entering, like a man drunk with the Holy Ghost, at once, without any other words, asked to be received into the order. But Master Reginald, from too great joy, not waiting till some one could seek for a habit took off his own capuce, clothed him at once, and Brother Guala, who was then sacristan having rung the bell, which was worth only twenty imperial pennies, and the Brothers chanting the "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (Come, O Holy Spirit) as was our custom, although on account of the abundance of tears and exuberance of joy, they could hardly sing, there was a great crowd of men, women, and students, and a wonderful excitement in the whole city."

"A great devotion was again stirred up towards the Brothers; they were universally praised, and all the former temptations van-

ished. But the two Brothers, prostrating themselves in the middle of the chapter room acknowledged that they had done wrong, humbly confessing their fault with tears, gave up their letters and persevered in the order." (*Vitæ Fratrum*, Pars. I. Cap. 5.)

About August of the same year (1219), the holy Father Saint Dominic, returning from Spain, came again to Bologna. He was rejoiced to find so large a community, and that he had not been mistaken in the abilities of Reginald his vicar. He sent him to Paris, believing that he would do still more for the order in his native land, among his own people. We can gain an inkling of the esteem Blessed Reginald was held by his brothers from the testimony of one historian of the Dominican order, who tells us that, although Saint Dominic himself, their founder and most beloved father, took up his abode among them in Bologna, yet Reginald was deeply regretted after his departure for Paris.

But whereas tears fell from their eyes as he left them the little community in Paris was filled with joy when he arrived. This joy, alas! was of short duration. He had returned to

his beloved France to die. Soon after his arrival, although his strength was impaired by his long journey, he began again to preach and again drew many into the order. His voice worked wonders. But it soon became evident that he could not continue such labors, and at the same time live so penitential a life. The Prior, Father Matthew, warned him and asked him how he could practise penances so severe when he had been raised in luxury, and had enjoyed every delicacy in his youth money could procure. Reginald answered, "I do not think I have merited anything in the order, for I have always been so happy in it;" and he continued his apostolic labors without softening any of his austerities.

Six months after his arrival in Paris he was reduced to great weakness and came to the door of death. Father Matthew suggested that he should receive the sacrament of extreme unction without delay. "I do not fear death," answered Reginald; "I await it with joy. I also am awaiting the Mother of Mercy who anointed me in Rome, with her own hands, in whom I place all my hope. But for fear that I might seem to despise the ecclesiastical

unction I am glad to receive it, and humbly beg you to administer it to me." After he had received that sacrament, in the presence of all the Brothers devoutly kneeling in prayer, he calmly slept in the Lord. It was in the beginning of February, 1220.

As the Dominicans had as yet no right of burial in the church of Saint James, his body was buried in the church of Notre Dame des Champs. For four centuries his tomb was a place of pious pilgrimage, and became famous for miraculous cures. His body was taken up between 1605 and 1608, found incorrupt, and placed in a shrine. In 1614 the church of Notre Dame des Champs was given to the Carmelite Sisters, and, his tomb, being within the enclosure, became forgotten, except by the Dominicans and the Carmelite Sisters. During the great French revolution the holy relics disappeared.

The immemorial cultus paid to him was confirmed by Pius IX. in 1875.

Prayer.

Ant. I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Reginald.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, Who hast given Thy blessed Confessor Reginald to Thy most holy Mother by a special protection, grant that by his merits and prayer, we may be strengthened by the perpetual help of the same glorious Mary, ever a virgin. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED NICOLAS OF GIOVA-
NAZZO.

BLESSED NICOLAS PALEA
OF GIOVANAZZO.

FEBRUARY 14.

UNLIKE the children of this world, who mourn on the anniversary of the death of their friends and relations, and rejoice on that of their birth, the Catholic Church passes by unnoticed the birthdays of her saints, but joyfully commemorates their death, because for a saint, death is the birth of a new and happier life.

He whose entrance into heaven we celebrate to-day was one of the disciples of St. Dominic, receiving the habit from his holy hands, and being privileged to be his companion on many of his missions. He labored successfully for forty years, preaching missions, instructing the ignorant, and many times working wonderful miracles.

He was born in 1197, at Giovanazzo, near Bari, in the kingdom of Naples. At baptism

he received the name of Nicolas, in honor of St. Nicolas of Myra, greatly venerated at Bari. His father, Blase, was of the noble family of Palea. His mother's name was Catharine. They taught him the holy fear of God, and had the dear consolation of knowing that their lessons were not lost on him. An ancient chronicle says of him, "Hardly eight years old he already gave up the use of meat, and his rigorous abstinence went so far that he would not eat it on Christmas day. His father's chaplain, who was also his tutor, soundly reproofed him for his singularity of life, and told him that to continue would offend God, and probably undermine his health. Young Nicolas listened respectfully, but when his tutor paused in his reproof knelt down, crossed his hands over his breast, and said, "Master! one day when I was all alone in my father's house, a young man, of rare beauty, came to me. He sent forth a heavenly perfume, and his appearance led me at once to love him. He said to me, "Son of obedience, I desire you to deprive yourself of flesh meat, because you will belong to a religious order that observes perpetual absti-

nence." After this he was allowed to continue in his penitential life.

When a few years older he was sent to study at the famous University of Bologna. St. Dominic was preaching there at that time. Nicolas went to hear him, and was so impressed by the eloquence and spiritual unction of the saint that he at once sought an interview with him, and modestly begged to be admitted into the number of his spiritual children. Nicolas was about twenty-one years of age. St. Dominic saw in him a true vocation, discerned a soul after his own heart, and gave him the habit with his own hands. He sent him to the monastery of Canosa, near Bari, to make his noviciate, after which he took his vows. The ancient chronicle recounts a miracle he worked even when he was a novice. "During his noviciate," the writer says, "Blessed Nicolas with several of his brethren passed near a town one day. A woman, whose arm had withered up and had become insensible without any life, was seen on the road. The holy novice was touched with compassion at this sight, and cried out, 'Poor woman! what have you done to your

arm!’ At this his fellow novices chid him for having broken the silence by talking to a secular person.

“‘I gave way to a feeling of pity and charity,’ answered the novice. Then turning towards the woman he said, ‘Have confidence in God, and believe that He will grant you the gift of perfect health.’ ‘Do you think so,’ said the woman. ‘Yes,’ continued Blessed Nicolas, ‘your faith will save you, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Hardly had he ceased speaking when the woman received the use of her arm again.”

St. Dominic became warmly attached to Blessed Nicolas; his angelic purity made him especially dear to him, and several times he took him with him as companion on his apostolic journeys in Italy.

Shortly after his entrance into the order Blessed Nicolas paid a visit to Giovanazzo, his native town. He was accompanied by Brother Masulio of Venice. On entering the town they saw a crowd of people gazing at a sad scene. A woman was wildly lamenting the sudden death of her child. It had fallen

into a well and was drowned. "Have confidence," the Blessed youth said to her, "your little son will be restored to you safe and sound." The sorrowful mother fell on her knees, and begged him to give her child back to her. "What is your little child's name," he asked. She answered that its name was Andrew. "For the future you will call him Nicolas," the saint answered, and then, in a loud voice, he commanded the inanimate body of the child to appear. "Nicolas," he said, "In the name of the Lord, arise!" At the same moment the body arose to the surface of the water, and Blessed Nicolas taking it into his hands, gave the child alive to his joyful mother.

He also worked several other remarkable miracles later on in Giovanazzo, his native town. His sisters Collette and Angelica dwelt there. Collette had a son dumb from his birth. When he was fifteen years of age she bethought herself to ask her holy brother to obtain a miraculous cure for his nephew. Having been eye-witness of many miracles he had worked, Collette reminded him that he ought to have as much care of those of his

own blood as of strangers. One day she sent her dumb son to the monastery to take the fathers some bread. Blessed Nicolas took the bread and asked his nephew from whom it came. At the same moment the boy's tongue was loosed and he answered, quite distinctly, "It was my mother;" and from that day he could speak without difficulty.

Another time a little girl born blind was taken to him to be cured. He blessed her, and the child having taken hold of his cloak placed it on her eyes, and at once she obtained the precious gift of sight, hitherto denied her by God.

Blessed Nicolas was the founder of several monasteries of his order. He preached one Lent in Trani, a town in Apulia. His preaching excited so much devotion towards the order that the citizens asked him to build a monastery in their town. He consented, and bade them spend a day in prayer, to ask God to make known to them on what site it was to be built. The Archbishop, his clergy, and all the people acceded to his pious request, and consecrated a day to prayer to learn the holy will of God. The next morning a cross of fire

was seen in the air over the site on which the monastery was eventually built. Everyone recognized in this apparition of the fiery cross a clear sign of God's will, and it was unanimously decided to commence the work without delay. Alms flowed in, and when completed it was dedicated under the name of Holy Cross. For many years a picture commemorating this miracle was to be seen hanging in one of the cells in the monastery dormitory. It represented Blessed Nicolas holding in his right hand a church, a fiery cross resting on the summit, and in his left hand a book, on whose open page was written, "Blessed Nicolas of Giovanazzo, founder of the Holy Cross in Trani."

He was next elected Provincial of the Roman Province, after the death of the venerable Clare of Sexto. This was in 1229, or 1230, as is known from a Bull addressed to him by Pope Gregory IX. Blessed Nicolas at once called together all the religious put under his charge, and earnestly addressed them, recommending them to live in great charity and peace one with another, and, as the author of the "*Vitæ Fratrum*" tells us

narrated to them the following anecdote to illustrate his meaning. "A certain Brother," he said, "had given me much trouble without any cause, and died a few days afterwards not having begged my pardon. But one night, I, being unwell, he appeared to me in a dream, and asked me to pardon him. Knowing that he was dead I said to him, 'Go, Brother, and ask pardon of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose hands you now are.' Going away from me when he had asked pardon from Christ as I bade him, our Lord said to him, 'I will not pardon you until you have first obtained the pardon of him you have offended.' He returned to me the same night, and repeating our Lord's words, he again begged my forgiveness which he obtained. After which he said to me, 'See Brother Nicolas, how evil it is to offend one's Brother, and how grave a fault it is not to please him.'" (*Vitæ Fratrum*, Pars. 4, Cap. 22.)

Blessed Nicolas was a prudent Provincial. He gained all hearts by sweetness and wisdom. He gave the habit to a very large number of novices, who in their turn founded monasteries, and labored zealously and successfully for

the salvation of souls, and the increase of the order. He did not interrupt his apostolic labors, and being as the chronicler has it, "a most gracious preacher," converted many sinners to the path of virtue.

In the year 1231, Pope Gregory IX., who constantly availed himself of the members of the two orders of mendicant Friars, Franciscans and Dominicans, for difficult diplomatic missions, commanded Blessed Nicolas to make a visitation of all the monasteries and convents of Tuscany, and associated with him, Blessed John of Salerno, Prior of Florence, and another Dominican Father, Frederick by name. In the same year Blessed Nicolas went to Naples to take formal possession of a new monastery built there by Father Thomas de Lentino, later on Patriarch of Antioch. It is at this time that we must place the following anecdote related by Father Gerard de Frachet in the "*Vitæ Fratrum*." "A novice," he says, "of the monastery of Naples, having fallen sick, the devil, transfigured into an angel of light, appeared to him and persuaded him not to speak to any one. But the novice remembered a grave fault which he had never yet

confessed. For fear of speaking he did not wish to say the hours of the divine office, nor even to answer any question put him. Perceiving that he was under some delusion the Fathers took the sick novice to Father Nicolas. By force of reason and examples Father Nicolas proved to the sick novice that his silence was inspired by the seduction of the demon, who desired to catch him in his net, and to draw him with himself into the eternal pit. The venerable Father's words and the prayers of the other Fathers saved the unfortunate youth from the monster's jaws. He consented to speak, made his confession, and understood the devil's artifice. He died a short time afterwards in holy dispositions."

Blessed Nicolas went to Perugia in the year 1233, where he founded another Dominican monastery, afterwards famous. Malvenda, citing an old work by Father Vincent Herculano, says, "It is a tradition come down from age to age that Saint Dominic came to Perugia, and that he met Saint Francis there one day in the street which leads to the gate of the holy angels, and that the two saints,

united in the love of Jesus Christ, tenderly embraced each other in that place. Yet the Dominican order had no monastery in Perugia during the lifetime of the blessed patriarch Dominic. It was not until 1233, twelve years later, that a monastery of our order was founded there. The cause which led to its foundation was as follows. A young nobleman of Perugia, of the illustrious family of Herman de Staffa, studying at that time at Bologna, moved by the preaching of Blessed Nicolas, gave up the world and all he possessed, took the habit, and entered the order of Friar Preachers. Some time afterwards Blessed Nicolas went to Perugia. As soon as he began preaching he excited the pious admiration of the crowds who ran to hear him, and set them on fire with the love of virtue.

It thus happened, thanks to the fervor of Brother Christian's parents, for such was the name the young nobleman took on entering the order, and principally by that force of persuasion which his burning exhortations possessed, that the foundation of a monastery was decided on. The Podesta, or chief magistrate of Perugia, with the common consent of

the citizens placed in the hands of Blessed Nicolas a standard, on which was represented the arms of the city; a griffin of silver on a field of gold, and declared that wherever he planted it, there the city would build a monastery of the Friar Preachers. Nicolas took the standard and planted it at Saint Peter's Gate, on a beautiful site, where one can see the smiling valley of Valliano and Assissi. Without delay they began to build a monastery and a magnificent church on that spot." A picture of Blessed Nicolas holding a church in his hands hangs in the monastery cloister.

In the same year Blessed Jordan of Saxony, second master-general of the order, called a general chapter at Bologna, during which the body of our most holy father Saint Dominic was solemnly translated. In his office as Provincial of the Roman Province, Blessed Nicolas took part in this chapter. The evening before the translation he was earnestly praying to God to grant some remarkable miracle on the occasion. That night in a vision, a venerable man appeared to him and said, "He will receive the blessing of the Lord, and the mercy of God his Saviour." On the following morning, the day

of the translation, Blessed Nicolas had the inestimable consolation of seeing once more the body of his father in God, and of finding it incorrupt, emitting a most delicious perfume.

Blessed Nicolas was freed from his duties as Provincial in 1235. He spent the remainder of his life preaching in the chief cities of Italy. Many miracles were worked by him during these fruitful years. At Massa, Margaret, a noble lady, was suddenly cured by him of deafness of nine years duration. At Arezzo, another lady of high rank, called Louisa, took her little daughter who was afflicted with two ulcers, to him to be cured. Falling on her knees she tearfully begged him to take pity on her child, and to obtain a miracle from God. He made the sign of the cross over it saying; "In the name of Jesus;" and spoke to the mother thus: "The Lord Jesus will grant you the grace you ask." Louisa returned to her home rejoiced, and the day after her child was so completely cured that there was not even a sign of any wound. As he was going to Milan one day to preach he saw a number of devils surrounding the city. He was seized with fear; but making the sign of the

cross they vanished. Many conversions accompanied his preaching. Preaching at another time in the Cathedral of Brescia to an immense crowd, two young libertines amused themselves by immodest gestures. The Blessed Father cried out, "Young men! listen to me," and then drew a fearful word-picture of the punishment of libertines in hell; and perceiving that they heeded not his warning he cried out, "O Eternal God! they despise your holy word to indulge in immodest thoughts!" and he left the church, the people following him. When he came to a hill he went up and stood on the summit, and cried out: "Seeing that men harden their hearts so far as to reject the word of God, In the name of Jesus Christ my Saviour, birds of heaven come and listen to it!" Thousands of birds answered his call; they surrounded the holy preacher, and hushing their songs seemed as if listening intently to him. For some time he poured out a stream of impassioned eloquence, the birds and the astounded people breathlessly listening to him, until he dismissed them both with his blessing.

He was again elected Provincial in 1255, but

died the same year in the monastery he had founded in Perugia. True to his vocation as a son of Saint Dominic, he was very devout to the holy Virgin Mary; and she, true to her office of special protector of the Dominican order watched over him in life and favored him at the hour of death. A Dominican father named Rao, who had been dead some time, appeared to him in a vision: "He appeared," says Father Gerard de Frachet in the "*Vitæ Fratrum*," to Blessed Nicolas, Prior Provincial of the Roman Province and said to him; "Dearest Brother Nicolas, the Virgin Mary counsels you to prepare yourself, because a crown of glory is now ready for you." Blessed Nicolas at once told his vision to his most intimate fellow religious, and a few days afterwards died a most holy and religious death. It was in the year 1265. He was sixty-eight years of age. He was buried in the old church, and for a long time his body reposed beneath an altar erected in his honor; until, during some repairs made to the building it was removed to the High Altar. The miracles obtained by invoking his intercession, and continual cultus paid to him led to a

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formal approbation by Pope Leo XII. in 1828.

Prayer.

Ant. The Lord mercifully heard his saint when he called upon Him; the Lord mercifully heard him and established him in peace.

V. Pray for us, O blessed Nicolas.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Mercifully infuse into us, O God, the spirit of Blessed Nicolas Thy confessor, that as Thou didst adorn him with singular grace for preaching Thy Word and procuring the salvation of his neighbor, so Thou would't grant us through his prayers even to remain in the same holy vocation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED LAURENCE OF RIPA-
FRATTA.

BLESSED LAURENCE OF RIPA- FRATTA.

FEBRUARY 18.

IN the middle ages the Republic of Pisa owed much of its safety and protection from the attacks of the Florentines and the citizens of Lucca, to the fortified castle of Ripafratta, built on the summit of a hill, at the foot of Mount Pisano. At the present day, although in ruins, it still preserves a threatening appearance, and seems to lord it over the small town of some six hundred inhabitants nestling beneath its foundations. It was in Ripafratta, March 4th, 1359, that Blessed Laurence was born. He belonged to the illustrious family of the Nobili, which later on produced the Ronciori, whose descendants still exist in the city of Pisa.

He was preserved in his youth by the grace of God from those sins which ruin so many youthful souls. It seems probable that he

went to study at Pisa with the intention of giving himself to the service of God in the religious state. He entered the Dominican Order, being then in Deacon's orders, about the year 1379, in the Monastery of Saint Catherine, in that city. He was about thirty-eight years of age. His novice-master was a holy and learned man eminently qualified to direct him in the ways of perfection.

At this time Blessed John Dominic, a celebrated Dominican preacher, came to Pisa. His renown was so great, that when St. Vincent Ferrer was invited by the Florentines to evangelize Tuscany, he expressed his astonishment that they should seek elsewhere for a preacher when they possessed so great a one as Blessed John Dominic. His eloquent sermons had a great effect on his hearers, but especially on young men, many of whom, despising the honors and pleasures of this present life, abandoned the world to enter the cloister. So that, like Blessed Jordan of Saxony, he became the terror of selfish mothers, who fearing to lose their sons forbade them to go to his sermons. For some time he had been laboring to effect a reform in the Dominican order.

It will be well to explain here, in a few words, why it had become necessary to institute such a reform. The plague of 1348 which had ravaged Europe had almost depopulated the Italian monasteries. A schism had also desolated the church, and divided the members of the religious orders into antagonistic bodies, throwing everything into fearful confusion. One of these causes alone would have been sufficient to ruin the most fervent religious order; united they almost destroyed the religious life. But God in His mercy, did not abandon the monastic institutions, and raised up many chosen souls to repair the ruins made by the plague and schism.

St. Catherine of Sienna had excited in the heart of her confessor, Blessed Raymund of Capua, an ardent desire to reform the Dominican order, which had suffered like the rest. As soon as he was placed at the head of the order, he made a powerful appeal to all who loved God and the order they had embraced. He obtained a noble response. Numbers of saintly men appeared in the order, and labored zealously and successfully for its revival on principles of primitive observance.

In Germany there was the Venerable Conrad of Prussia, and in Italy Blessed John Dominic, Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta, and many others no less holy than zealous. Blessed Clara Gambacorti reformed her own monastery in Pisa, and sent out sisters to do the same work in Genoa, Parma, and Venice.

Blessed John Dominic, meeting with a very strong opposition in the monasteries of Florence and Pisa, began by reforming that of St. Dominic in Venice. From that community the reform spread to the large monastery of Saints John and Paul in the same city, and to St. Dominic's in Citta di Castello, in Umbria. In the latter monastery he was materially assisted by Blessed Laurence. Blessed John Dominic soon learnt what a valuable coadjutor he had found in Laurence of Ripafratta. Every one acknowledged his holiness. To a life of angelic purity, he added a very rigid austerity, a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and an inviolable regularity and fidelity in observing the rule of the order. To all these virtues was joined so deep an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures and so profound a perception of their meaning, that he merited the name of

“Ark of the New Testament;” a name also given to Saint Antony of Padua.

Blessed John Dominic saw quickly that in order to insure the continuance of his reform, it was necessary to form a good novitiate. He intended to confide the important but difficult office of Novice Master to Father Michael Tosi, a young Pisan whom he had converted from a life of licentiousness to the service of Christ. But this father died in the flower of his age, a victim to the charity with which he nursed the brothers sick of the plague. He then chose Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta, who was eminently fitted for that office.

The novitiate was established at Cortona on the borders of Tuscany, in the midst of a fertile country, under a delightful sky. This was an admirable situation for the spiritual exercises of the novitiate. Soon after this had been done, Blessed John Dominic was made Archbishop of Ragusa and eventually raised to the Cardinalate. Blessed Laurence became Novice Master between 1402 and 1405. Among his novices were several who have left their mark on the footprints of time. In 1405 a young

Florentine, bearing the warmest recommendations from Blessed John Dominic, knocked at the monastery gate, and falling at Blessed Laurence's feet, begged to be admitted as a choir novice. It was Saint Antoninus of Florence, hardly sixteen years of age. He was followed soon after by Blessed Peter Capucci, who having received the habit in Citta di Castello, his native town, went to Cortona to place himself under the direction of the holy novice master. In the year 1407 two artists, from Mugello, joined the novitiate. They were Fra Angelico and his brother Fra Benedetto. In the direction of his novices Blessed Laurence showed marvellous tact. He trained them in the path of mortification, avoiding that excess of sweetness and indulgence by which so many young souls are ruined ; while at the same time he restrained them from the fervid excitement which is so apt to deceive beginners in the paths of perfection, and by which so many undermine their health, and condemn themselves by indiscreet penance to a life of uselessness. Thus, although his own life was penitential, he softened the austerities of the rule as much as lay in his power, without destroying

discipline or departing from the spirit and aim of the order. By means of frequent spiritual instructions he fanned the flames of divine love in the novices' hearts. Another quality in Blessed Laurence, worthy of the highest praise, was the wisdom with which he understood and cherished the special vocation of each of his novices. While he never allowed them to lose sight of the chief end of the order, penance and zeal, he seconded them in the full development of each one's peculiar talents. To Blessed Peter, whose inclinations sympathized with his own, he opened the ways of contemplation. To Saint Antoninus he counselled the investigation of the infinite field of science, human and divine. He allowed Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto to devote their talents to painting, but revealed to them heavenly models to guide their artistic inspirations. "Dear Brothers," he often said to them, "I beseech you to whom God has not given the gift of knowledge, to follow the career of painting, in which you will be none the less true Friar Preachers. For it is not only by words that we persuade men to love virtue and flee from vice, it is also by the example of a

stainless life, and by the arts which are the outward expression of men's inward thoughts ; sublime arts, among which music and painting hold the first place. It will undoubtedly come to pass that many sinners, whom the preaching of the Fathers of our order will not influence, touched by looking at the pictures you place before their eyes, will be converted. You have an advantage of which the preacher is deprived. Words cannot reach those who are afar off, and the most eloquent voice cannot speak from the tomb to the sinner. But your heavenly pictures will have an immortal influence, for centuries they will remain as efficacious preachers of religion and virtue."

We do not know how long the happy disciples remained under Blessed Laurence's direction. During his long residence in Cortona, he was often sent to preach in the neighboring towns and villages. The word of God fell from his pure lips like it fell from the lips of the Apostles and prophets. St. Antoninus, more than once in his works expressed his admiration for Blessed Laurence's preaching, and does not hesitate to

compare him with St. Paul the Apostle of preaching.

But the great virtue and prudence which characterized Blessed Laurence could not remain always buried in obscurity. He was appointed Vicar General of the reformed Congregation, he had so faithfully served. In the new sphere of usefulness in which he now found himself, he manifested new gifts of prudence. He took up his residence in the Monastery of Saint Dominic at Pistoria. He was now much more free to attend to the ministry of souls. He preached continuously, catechized the poor in the country places, visited and consoled the sick, particularly those stricken down by the plague, and abandoned by their relations and friends.

His former novice, Saint Antoninus, having been raised to the Archiepiscopal See of Florence, he frequently consulted Blessed Laurence in all his difficulties and trials. Saint Antoninus was very unwilling to accept so exalted a dignity, one which brought with it such an alarming responsibility. Neither the supplications of the Magistrates of Florence, nor the well-known wishes of the Pope

could persuade him to give his consent. But when Blessed Laurence told him it was God's holy will he withdrew all opposition and was consecrated Archbishop. What St. Bernard did for Pope Eugenius the Third, Blessed Laurence now did for St. Antoninus of Florence. He wrote frequent letters to his former novice, full of heavenly wisdom, instructing him on the office and duties of a christian Bishop. He descended to the smallest details, the management of his episcopal palace, and such like. He knew that the households of the great are too frequently little regulated, and advised him to watch over all under his care, so that no scandals could arise. He advised him not to allow women or children in his palace except in case of necessity.

Blessed Laurence was now near his hundredth year. Exhausted by a laborious and penitential life, he also suffered much from an ulcer in his leg. But he enjoyed the rare happiness of seeing so many of his novices ornaments to the church and to the Dominican Order. Three of his novices have been placed on our altars, by the infallible voice of the church, and many others who did not receive

that honor, have left behind them an eternal renown. Another great happiness granted him was to see the reform of the order blessed by God and extended to all parts of Italy.

His death was like his life. When his end drew near he received the sacraments of holy church with great piety, and then, turning towards his Brethren, he exhorted them to labor unceasingly for the salvation of souls, and to keep the Dominican rule faithfully, to become models of holiness in their own persons; so that the people, seeing the holiness of their lives, might be encouraged to walk in the paths of virtue. He died in the Lord, September 28, 1457, aged ninety-eight.

It was not long before God made his sanctity certain by many miracles at his tomb; but he was not beatified until the year 1851.

Prayer.

Ant. Planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, he shall spring up like a lily, and shall flourish forever before the Lord.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Laurence.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who madest Blessed Laurence, Thy confessor, to shine forth with zeal for regular discipline, and didst inflame him with the ardors of divine love, grant at his intercession, that ever following after the more perfect ways, we may attain to everlasting joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED ALVAREZ OF CORDOVA.

BLESSED ALVAREZ OF CORDOVA.

FEBRUARY 19.

THE historians of the Dominican Order do not agree on the place where Blessed Alvarez was born, whether it was in Lisbon or Cordova, in which latter city he spent the greater part of his life. All assert, however, that he was of noble family. He entered the order in the monastery of St. Paul in Cordova, in the year 1368. Having sanctified himself during his novitiate by penance and prayer he began his ministry with wonderful success, and soon converted numbers of sinners from an evil life. He evangelized Andalusia, at the same time that the great Dominican preacher and miracle-worker, St. Vincent Ferrer, was in the midst of his labors in Castile. From Spain Blessed Alvarez went into Italy, and preached there with success equal to that he obtained in his native land.

We next hear of him in Palestine, occupied

in the same labor of the conversion of sinners. His deep devotion to the Passion of Our Divine Lord caused him to remain a long time in the Holy Land. His love for preaching found ample scope in Palestine, peopled as it was with Turks, Schismatics, and bad Catholics from every land ; and the sadness of his heart at the sight of so much sin on the very site of the redemption of mankind caused him to shed bitter tears of grief and indignation. In 1405 he returned to Spain, and found his native land on the eve of a struggle with the Moors. The Moorish King of Granada had refused to pay tribute to the King of Castile, to which he was bound by ancient treaties, and having taken forcible possession of the town of Ayamonte was busily preparing for new conquests. Don Henry II., King of Castile, protested in vain against the infraction of the treaties and could obtain no satisfaction.

Blessed Alvarez went about preaching penance, and endeavored to impress on the people's mind that the victory of the Christians over the Moors depended on a change of manners **among** themselves. The fame his

holiness had acquired, the eloquence of his sermons, and his patriotic appeals made a vivid impression on their souls, and in a short time a truly marvellous change was seen in Andalusia. He constantly reminded them that when the Spanish people were faithful to God and to the duties of religion, they had always conquered their enemies ; but that God had delivered them up to the horrors of war, famine, and the disgraceful yoke of their enemies when they had abandoned themselves to the gratification of their passions, despising the teachings of their holy religion.

Don Henry, finding himself forced into a war with the Moors, convoked the Cortes at Toledo, that he might consult the Grandees of his kingdom as to the best means of carrying it out with success. In answer to his appeal they assembled at Toledo from all parts in great numbers ; but they arrived in time only to celebrate his funeral, for the young king died on Christmas day, 1406.

His death left the kingdom in danger from enemies without and factions within. The Grandees endeavored to crown the late king's brother, Don Ferdinand, putting aside the

young Prince Juan, son of Don Henry. Queen Catherine, the late king's widow begged Blessed Alvarez to come to her aid, to secure her son's rights and thus insure peace to the kingdom. He acceded to her wishes, and employed all his remarkable talents of persuasion to inspire the Grandees with the sole desire of securing the good of the kingdom, and at the same time to suggest to the queen a spirit of moderation. God blessed his efforts. The baby-prince, Don Juan II., was proclaimed King of Castile, and the regency divided between Queen Catherine and Don Ferdinand. Blessed Alvarez became the queen's confessor and adviser, and in this double office acquitted himself with universal satisfaction, and when the young prince was old enough to receive advice he labored to instil into his mind solid principles of religion, morality and justice, and taught him to be a true father to his people and the supporter and defender of the church.

As soon as Castile was at peace within, the war against the Moors was undertaken, and crowned with success. All the towns which had been captured by the Moors were re-

gained, and the baneful power of the Mussulman effectually checked.

Blessed Alvarez also worked a great reformation in the morality of the court and courtiers. His holy and self-denying life was a silent lesson to those nobles, who, as is usual in the courts of princes, loved the pleasures of this life and the pomp of earthly power more than they loved God. Respecting him on account of his genuine and unfeigned virtues, they soon learned to restrain their inordinate pride, and to practise all the virtues of true Christians. But the peace of the kingdom was again disturbed, and this time Blessed Alvarez was powerless to avert the dissensions which arose. The regency was divided, Old Castile was given to the queen, while Don Ferdinand took charge of New Castile. Blessed Alvarez now found himself much freer than before; he was no longer obliged to remain at court, and was enabled to resume the work of preaching so long interrupted. He set out to preach, and visited every part of Old Castile and Leon, everywhere doing grand work for souls.

Three years after the division of the regency

Don Ferdinand became King of Aragon, and Queen Catherine obtained the sole regency in Castile.

She earnestly requested Blessed Alvarez to assist her in governing the country by his wise advice, but he begged to be entirely free to practise the studies of his holy ministry. He had long formed the intention of founding a community of primitive observance of the Dominican Rule. If he wished he could have built a magnificent monastery and amply endowed it: for the queen and Castilian nobles would readily have furnished him with the necessary means. A true disciple of St. Dominic, he chose rather to begin in the strictest poverty, and desired to build a monastery such as St. Dominic himself would have built. Wishing to make it a true home of prayer, retirement, and study, he chose a solitary site, far enough from the haunts of men not to be disturbed, and yet sufficiently near to a large town to carry out the Dominican vocation of preaching. The site selected was on a mountain a few miles from Cordova. He called it "Scala Cœli," or the "Ladder of Heaven," to remind those who dwelt in it

that Heaven should be the sole wish of their hearts, and that all their studies and monastic duties were only to be the means of attaining that eternal bliss.

The new monastery was soon filled. Many Fathers came to him from all parts of Spain, desiring to be taught by him the secrets of perfection. They were all filled with his own spirit, and Scala Cœli soon became famous as a seminary of sanctity, learning, and piety; and the holy missionaries it sent forth did much for the honor and glory of God and the conversion of sinners.

Perhaps the most important service rendered by this monastery to the church was the part the Fathers took in reuniting the people in obedience to the authority of the legitimate Pope. In fighting against the Anti-Pope Peter de Luna, Blessed Alvarez knew that he had to encounter the influence of many of the powerful of this world, and that money and authority would be employed against him. He foresaw the difficulties which he and his newly founded community would have to face, and yet he did not flinch, because he saw that it was his duty. St. Vincent Ferrer,

his fellow-Dominican, on withdrawing from obedience to Peter de Luna, had caused the King of Aragon to submit to the decrees of the Council of Constance, and to the authority of Martin V., who was elected by the Fathers of that council. Blessed Alvarez, animated with the same zeal for the peace of the church, resolved to lead the court of Castile to follow the example of the King of Aragon. Everything was against him. Passion, intrigue, prejudice, interest, and the Grandees, all were, at first arrayed on the side of the Anti-Pope.

Queen Catherine of Castile had sent ambassadors to the Council of Constance, and having consented to abandon Peter de Luna she sent a second embassy of Bishops, which took away the last obstacle to the peace of the Church.

The queen died soon after this happy event. Thus the influence which Blessed Alvarez always possessed over the queen, his fervent prayers and fasts and continual preaching led the Kingdom of Castile to acknowledge the true Vicar of Christ.

After this happy event Blessed Alvarez, instead of taking repose, which his labors and

now advanced age merited him, again entered with new ardor into the work of preaching. Catechising, instructing the poor and ignorant, healing the sick, consoling the afflicted, destroying superstitions, reconciling enemies,—such were the holy occupations to which he again gave himself, and which he continued until the end of his life ; and to these already sufficiently arduous labors he added many severe penances and spent many hours in prayer. After passing the whole day in preaching and administering the sacraments in the Andalusian mountains, he returned to his beloved monastery of Scala Cœli, where he spent nearly the whole night in prayer at the foot of the altar, knocking unceasingly at the door of Divine Mercy to obtain new graces to enable him to continue the work of the ministry. Clothed in hair-cloth, with an iron chain around his loins, he subjected his body to the law of the spirit, and obtained a continued victory over all his passions ; and in proportion as his age and labors continued he lengthened his nightly watches, and his fasts became more frequent and severe. He had blotted out his high rank from his memory, and delighted in serving the lowliest

members of the community. He and his brethren lived on alms. It was his delight to go out and beg. He often went into the great square of Cordova, when the merchants were met together for commerce, and there he would address them, and conclude his discourse with these words: "My dear Brethren, the poor friars of St. Dominic in the mountain recommend themselves to your charity," and he always succeeded in his appeal.

God sometimes allowed the community to be reduced to great necessity, that he might show how dear to him were the virtues of his servant Alvarez. One day there was not a crumb of bread or food of any kind in the monastery. The Procurator went to the Prior and told him there was only a lettuce, which remained from the evening meal of the day before. Blessed Alvarez exhorted the fathers and brothers to trust in God, and to go to the refectory when the dinner bell rang, although there was nothing to serve. When the time came he gave the customary blessing, and then began to pray God to have pity on his servants reduced to so great need. And while he prayed the monastery bell rang, and the porter found

a man there with a mule laden with provisions, bread, wine, fish, and all manner of food. He ran to tell the Prior, who bade him thank their benefactor; but on the brother's return he had gone, and they were never able to learn who had sent the provisions.

When building the monastery of Scala Cœli materials several times failed. Blessed Alvarez began to pray, and during the night a great noise was heard, as if stone was being cut and wood sawed. In the morning everything was found on the ground prepared for building, and it was never discovered who had set it there or whence it had come.

One day, as Blessed Alvarez was passing through the principal street of Cordova, on his way home after preaching, he found a poor man covered with ulcers in a dying condition. With his cloak he covered the man, and carried him on his shoulders to the monastery. As he was passing through the cloisters one of the Fathers asked him what load he bore. He answered, "It is a poor dying man I found in the street abandoned by all. I brought him here to take care of him; my heart would not let me leave him there in that condition."

He laid his burden on the floor and uncovered it, and behold they saw not a man but a figure of Christ on the cross. This crucifix was afterwards hung in one of the chapels of the monastery church, where it is still an object of universal devotion.

His penances, always severe, became more so as his life drew near to an end. He disciplined himself to blood, and undertook a penance very hard to practise. He often walked on his knees, disciplining himself all the while to a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of Pity. The road was rocky, and the angels of God frequently accompanied him, clearing away the little rocks and upholding him by the arms. After his death, the Fathers who had been privileged to see these heavenly favors, caused a picture to be painted representing the holy man kneeling, his bared shoulders welted with the cruel discipline and attended by angels who knelt all around him. This picture is still to be seen at Cordova. The great devotion to the Passion of our Divine Lord which had led him to visit the Holy Land, also inspired him to build several small chapels in the monastery of Scala Coeli, in which he

caused the different scenes in the Passion of Jesus Christ to be painted. In the first was the Agony in the Garden of Olives; in the second, Judas betraying Our Lord, kissing Him with a traitor's kiss; in the third, the bloody flagellation at the pillar; in the fourth the crowning with thorns; the Ecce Homo in the fifth; in the next Jesus carrying His cross to Calvary; in the seventh the crucifixion and in the last the dead Christ in the arms of His sorrowful mother.

This last chapel was called Our Lady of Pity, and this was his favorite place for prayer and penance. One evening, when he had shut himself up in one of these chapels, the rain came down in such torrents, that a little brook which divided the garden from the monastery, had become so swollen that he could not cross it. The bell rang for Matins, the midnight office in the choir; what could he do?

He raised his eyes to God, took off his black cloak, spread it on the running waters, stepped upon it and safely walked to the other side; then he put it on again and went to Matins in the choir.

He was several times endowed with the gift of prophecy.

A holy life was crowned by a holy death. He died February 19, 1420. He was buried in the monastery church, but the miracles which were wrought every day at his tomb caused Martin de Mendoza, Bishop of Cordova, to enshrine his relics in a costly case, and place them in a chapel where they could be easily approached. Ecclesiastics of all ranks went there to say Mass, and many of them deposed that delicious perfumes exhaled from the holy relics. An authentic record of all the miracles was written and received the Bishop's approval.

The Fathers of our order remained in the monastery of Scala Cœli until John of Toledo, a Dominican Bishop of Cordova, gave them the Church of the Holy Martyrs, in his diocesan-city. As soon as they had established themselves in their new monastery they set about to transfer the relics of Blessed Alvarez into their new church; but when the two Priors of St. Paul's and the Holy Martyrs, accompanied by a crowd of pious people, went to the Church of Scala Cœli, and attempted to carry away the

coffer in which the body reposed, a thunder-storm burst forth, and they replaced it on the altar and then the storm immediately ceased. It burst forth again on their endeavoring a second time to remove the relics. Every one deemed it to be the will of Heaven and of the holy man himself that his body should remain in the church of the monastery he had founded and had so dearly loved.

Desolate for nearly a century, Scala Cœli was restored by the celebrated Dominican Father Lewis of Granada, and once more the divine worship of praise ascended to heaven from the long deserted church, and the Friars of St. Dominic again meditated in the cloisters, and observed all the sweet monastic observances in the monastery Blessed Alvarez had built. Then took place a great revival of popular devotion to Alvarez, which having continued, Pope Benedict XIV. approved his cultus in 1741.

Prayer.

Ant. O good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

V. Pray for us, O blessed Alvarez.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst endow Blessed Alvarez Thy confessor with the graces of penance and divine love, grant that by his intercession we may ever bear the mortification of Christ in our bodies, and Thy love in our hearts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED AIMO TAPARELLI.

BLESSED AIMO TAPARELLI.

FEBRUARY 21.

MANY saints adorned the church towards the end of the fourteenth and the commencement of the fifteenth centuries. The church was passing through great trials. Numerous causes had led to a general relaxation in discipline and morals. The plague which had carried away so many of the priests of the church had worked no less havoc among the members of the religious orders. The old laborers were dead, and the few who yet remained were so discouraged by the difficulties they encountered, that the sacred fire of fervor and apostolic zeal was smouldering in its ashes. Yet it was not dead, God did not abandon His church. The Queen of Confessors still knelt in supplication at the foot of the throne of mercy, and as of old, in times of need, a crowd of saints began to fill the christian church. And like the holy Mother

of God, the apostolic Dominic, whose preaching had saved the church two hundred years before by destroying heresy, rose again in his might, in the person of his sons, saved the grand order he had founded, and once more materially aided in saving the church.

Blessed Aimo is little known at the present day, and the records of his life are but scant. He is like those little streams which flow on forever, a continual source of sweet verdure to the land around, but whose name is known to none but to the inhabitants of the hamlets through which they pass. He is no less a star in Saint Dominic's crown, and his heroic sanctity has been proclaimed by the church.

He was a native of Savigliano, a town of seventeen thousand inhabitants in Piedmont, and was born in the castle of the Count of Lagnasco. Piety and learning were instilled into him while yet a boy. Though gifted with an intelligent mind, and possessing a handsome face he avoided all the snares to vanity. Perceiving the emptiness of human delights he yearned for the happiness of heaven. Seeing the need of laborers in Christ's vineyard, he gave himself to God and the service of His

church by entering the order of Friar Preachers. He received the habit in the monastery of his native town. From that time he had but one thought, to render himself worthy of the apostolate by prayer, penance, and study. Piety without solid learning is insufficient for him who is the guide of souls, while learning, unless sanctified by prayer and seasoned with penance, is still more hurtful. So he studied and prayed, and thus he became a saint.

In due time, from a scholar he was made master, and employed in teaching in the University of Turin, an honor and distinction conferred on only the most eminent among the Dominican professors. He was also an indefatigable preacher, and led many hardened sinners back to God and penance, and had the great satisfaction of persuading several heretics to return to God's holy church.

His reputation for learning, eloquence, and holiness having become known to Blessed Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, he invited him to preach at his court, and it is supposed that the prince confided his conscience to his care, the greatest mark of esteem one saint can give to another.

Blessed Bartholomew Cerverius, having fallen a martyr to the rage of the heretics, Blessed Aimo was chosen to succeed him in the office of commissary of the holy Inquisition, and was invested with the office of Vicar General of Savigliano, with the duty of watching over the purity of the faith in Alba, Mondovi, Saluzzo, and the neighboring country. Soon afterwards he was nominated Inquisitor General in Upper Lombardy and Liguria, a laborious and difficult office which he kept until his death. He was frequently elected Prior of Savigliano, and more than once Vicar Provincial. His personal example and his eloquent exhortations powerfully contributed to the maintenance of religious discipline. During his priorate the body of Blessed Antony of Pavia was solemnly translated to Savigliano. This Dominican martyr met with his death at the hands of the Vaudois, having attempted to combat their deadly errors in Piedmont.

In the midst of his multiplied labors he lived in continual recollection and peace of soul. He had these words, "To serve God is to reign," continually on his lips. He caused

them to be written on the door of his cell, and on the façade of the monastery church; and his whole life was one practical application of his favorite motto. Sometimes he retired into a solitary place on a mountain near Saluzzo, where he could give himself without hindrance to prayer and contemplation. His familiarity with the holy angels was known to all. He continually conversed with them, and once on the feast of Saint Hyppolitus and his fellow martyrs, when saying the Divine office, he came to these words of the psalms, "Exultabunt sancti in gloria," "The saints shall rejoice in glory," the angels answered him: "Lætabuntur in cubilibus suis," "They shall be joyful in their beds" (Psalm cxlix. v. 5), from which he knew that his own death was near at hand.

He slept in the Lord two days afterwards, the Holy Mother of God, whom he had so much loved and served so faithfully, obtaining for him the grace to die on the feast of her glorious Assumption into heaven. Embracing the crucifix, which he held tightly in his hands for a long time after his soul had been reunited

to his Creator, he died, August 15, 1495, in his hundredth year.

An immense crowd gathered round his mortal remains. Everyone desired to obtain some pious relic, and there was but one opinion about his sanctity, but it was not until the present century that the formal approbation of the church was asked and obtained for his public worship.

Prayer.

Ant. Blessed is this saint who trusted in the Lord; he preached the commandments of the Lord, and is now established upon His holy mountain.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Aimo,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful God, to serve whom is to reign, grant through the merits and intercession of Blessed Aimo, Thy confessor, whom thou madest a famous champion of the Faith, that, keeping Thy command-

ments faithfully on earth, we may deserve to enjoy Thy eternal kingdom with him in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED CONSTANTIUS OF
FABRIANO.

BLESSED CONSTANTIUS OF FABRI- ANO.

FEBRUARY 25.

To write the life of a saint, to sketch in words what has passed in the heart, to give an account not so much of the man or his actions, as of his motives, to propose his sanctity for imitation, is a task in which indeed it is easy to fail. But when little is known of his life, it is well-nigh impossible to do justice to so high a theme.

Such is the case with him who sets himself to write the life of Blessed Constantius, so few records and such scanty details have been handed down to posterity.

Among the wise ordinations made in the fifteenth century, by Raymund of Capua, Master General of the order, for the restoration of primitive discipline, was one that recommended that there should be in every Dominican Province at least one monastery of

strict observance of the rule. The Fathers of the monastery of Saint Lucy at Fabriano hastened to carry out this ordination, and merited the happiness of obtaining for Prior Blessed John Dominic, and Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta; and it seems probable that it was from the hands of the latter that Blessed Constantius received the habit.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, near the monastery of Saint Lucy in Fabriano, there dwelt the pious family of Bernard de Servoli. Constantius, one of his sons, was noted for his truly remarkable piety, which gained for him the name of "Friend of the good God." Chosen by God for the service of the altar, many signs made known His holy will. He had a sister nine years old, who had passed seven years of her brief life in a sickness declared by physicians to be incurable. One day, Constantius led his parents to his sister's bedside, and begged them to kneel down with him to implore God to grant a cure. They did so, and as soon as their simple prayer had risen to heaven her pains ceased, her weakness vanished, never to return, and she was restored to health. This was

regarded as a miracle, and ascribed to the merits of his prayers and holiness, and caused him to be regarded as a saint.

Bernard and his wife often asked each other if, instead of a son, God had not sent them an angel to show them the way to heaven, more especially when they happened to hear Constantius exhorting sinners to repentance, by reminding them of the shortness of life, the nearness of death, and the judgment of God, and earnestly begging them to live in the fear of God, obedient to His holy laws, and in the practise of christian virtues. His words were so forcible that the most hardened sinners were obliged to listen, and when they listened their hearts were changed. The nothingness of this fleeting world, the hollowness of human pleasures, the sad inclination to sin man finds within himself, the malice of the devil, such were the great truths he meditated on in his youth, and by which he never failed to lead sinners to repentance.

When Constantius arrived at the age of fifteen he felt that God had given him a vocation to enter the Dominican order, and in the unsullied whiteness of his baptismal innocence

he went to the monastery in Fabriano, and having humbly asked to be admitted, received the holy habit. Of his novitiate and the years immediately following we have only a few words of record, which tell us, that like a true Dominican, he loved to pray, delighted to meditate on the Holy Scriptures, and that he excelled in his studies; also that he wrote several commentaries on Aristotle.

After his ordination he taught in the Dominican schools of philosophy and theology, in the principal Italian cities, with unusual profit to his pupils. His style was brief, clear, easy yet solid, and his lectures were distinguished for elevation of thought. He seems to have been one of the first of those generous souls who began the reform of the celebrated monastery of San Marco in Florence. While engaged in teaching in that city he predicted the death of one of his students, and the event proved the truth of his prophecy. Among those who attended his lectures was a young man, a native of Genoa. One day the saint told him not to bathe, because if he did he would be drowned. The young student neglected the warning, went to bathe as usual,

and was no sooner in the water than he lost his depth, and sank, never again to rise.

Going one day from Florence to Pisa he found a man in the middle of the road, who had been thrown by his mule, and so badly hurt that he had broken one arm, and put his ankle out of joint. He begged the father to take him to the nearest place where he could pass the night. Blessed Constantius tenderly bade him place his confidence in God's power and goodness. Then having knelt a moment in earnest prayer he blessed him, and when he arose the man was cured.

Unlike the greater number of Dominican saints, who were remarkable for their pious gayety of heart and joyousness of manner, Blessed Constantius was usually sad and very grave. He was constantly in tears, and his face bore marks of Christian melancholy. Asked one day why he seldom laughed, he answered, "Alas Brother! I do not know whether my deeds are pleasing in the sight of God." In the chronicle of the monastery of Perugia, of which monastery he was Prior, he is described as "a man of admirable penance." To the long fast of the order, which com-

mencing on the 14th of February does not cease until Easter Sunday, he added a fast on bread and water on all the Fridays of Lent; and he observed the Dominican Rule of perpetual abstinence from flesh meat so strictly, that even in old age he never broke it. His sleep was short, and he wore a shirt covered with iron nails, which was religiously perserved in the monastery of Ascoli until its suppression in 1866. His confessor testified after his death, that he kept intact the flower of his virginity. After reciting matins at midnight in the choir he never retired to rest, but remained near the altar in prayer until morning. His tears bedewed the pavement, and his fervor was such that his cries and groans often disturbed the slumbers of the other Fathers of the monastery. God gave him prophetic light. Thus he predicted the sack of Fabriano, in 1517. To prophecy, God joined the power of working miracles, which, as we have already seen he enjoyed in his childhood. He cured a Brother of the order of a sickness incurable by medicine, restored sight to a blind man, and more wonderful still, recalled a dead man to life. This man's parents and those who

were present, turned him into ridicule, and accused him of tempting God, when he said to the dead man, "In the name of Jesus Christ, arise!" But when the dead man arose, obedient to the saint's voice, they fell at his feet in fear. He bade them rise and said, "Never despise any of God's servants. Call to your mind our Blessed Saviour's promise: 'They who believe in me, shall do the works I do, and much greater.'" The death of Saint Antoninus was revealed to him at the time it took place. After the matins of the second of March, 1459, he remained according to his custom, in the choir, when just at daybreak, he saw the souls of two Dominicans leaving this world. One descended into Purgatory, but the other, which he recognized as that of novice master, St. Antoninus, rose at once to glory. Pope Clement VII. in his bull of the canonization of St. Antoninus mentions this vision: "The opinion which every one had of the goodness and holiness of the Archbishop," says the Pope, "was still more increased by the visions with which were favored a Cistercian monk of Florence, and Constantius of Fabriano, a professed religious of the Order of

Friar Preachers, no less illustrious by the holiness of his life, than by his science and doctrine. At the same hour as the death of Blessed Antoninus, both saw the angels carrying his soul to heaven." Clement VII. had known Blessed Constantius when he was appointed Governor of Fabriano by his cousin and predecessor, Leo the Tenth.

Blessed Constantius was accustomed to say the office of the dead every day, and very often the whole of the psalms of David. This seems to have been a favorite devotion among the Dominican Saints of olden times. Until late years the constitutions required the novices to learn the whole of the psalms by heart, not only that they might the more easily recite the divine office without books in the choir, but also that the words of the royal psalmist might ever be on their lips. Blessed Constantius, faithful to the spirit of his order, knew the psalms by heart, and loved to season his words with extracts from them. And we are told that when he desired any great favor from God, he said the Psalter for that intention, and to invite his fellow Dominicans to love and practise the same devotion, he told

them one day, that he never completed the recitation of the Psalter without obtaining what he prayed for. In 1473 the Turks attacked Greece; some one asked him to say the Psalter that they might repulse their enemy. Several times he commenced to say it for that intention, and as many times was hindered from completing it, when he told his brothers that God had given him a sign that he wished to punish the Greeks for their sins.

He was several times Prior of Fabriano and Perugia, and always proved a prudent superior. His great attraction to prayer and recollection did not hinder him from taking a prominent share in public events. He reconciled factions, and appeased popular tumults. He rebuilt the monastery of Ascoli. It still remains and is a model of a religious house, humble in its style and severe in its architecture. The city council several times aided him with means to continue the building when funds were wanting, to show their esteem and veneration for the holy Prior. He assisted in 1474 at the Provincial chapter at Mantua of the Dominican congregation of Lombardy. His reputation and the fame of the miracles he

had wrought had preceded him, and the veneration in which he was held broke out in a popular demonstration on his arrival. To see him or speak to him, to touch him or his habit seemed an inestimable favor all were anxious to enjoy, and large pieces of his habit were cut off which were carefully preserved as relics.

The following year the inhabitants of Fabriano made endeavors to persuade his superiors to send him to spend the remaining years of his life in his native town, but he obtained permission to remain in Ascoli, and thus escape so much honor and veneration. On the Sunday before Sexagesima, 1481, February 24, every one was surprised to see a number of little children running through the streets of Ascoli, and to hear them crying out, "The holy Prior is dead, the holy Prior is dead." The Blessed Father was indeed dead. He slept in the Lord on that day. The Senate and town council assembled on the news of his death, and "considering" as the words of the records of its deliberations have it, "that his death was a public calamity," resolved to assist at his funeral, and to defray part of the cost of the ceremony. God also

wished to honor his faithful servant, and the staff which the Blessed Father had used in his old age became a miracle worker. Many miracles were the divinely given reward of prayers in honor of Blessed Constantius, more especially in Ascoli, Fabriano and Perugia.

Although miracles through his intercession have continued without ceasing, and the voice of a grateful people has continually proclaimed him a saint, it was only recently, in 1811, that the church formally sanctioned his cultus. After that time miracles multiplied at his tomb in Ascoli, until 1866 when the cruel revolution drove the Fathers away from the monastery. Since then his venerable relics cry to God in the solitude of the silent shrine. His head was taken to Fabriano in 1529 by a Dominican Father, and confided to the care of the Carmaldolese monks of the monastery of St. Sebastian. It still remains there, the object of popular veneration.

Blessed Constantius wrote "The Life of Blessed Conrad of Brescia," his novice master; also lives of some other Blessed of the order, and "Sermons 'De Tempore' and 'De Sanctis.'"

Prayer.

Ant. This saint shall dwell, O Lord, within Thy tabernacle : he hath wrought justice, he shall rest upon Thy holy mountain.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Constantius.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst make Blessed Constantius, Thy confessor, glorious amongst the people for his continual exercise of prayer and his zeal in the promotion of peace, grant at his intercession, that always walking in the paths of justice, we may attain to everlasting peace and glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED CHRISTOPHER OF MILAN.

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MARCH 1.

BLESSED CHRISTOPHER received the Dominican habit in the Monastery of St. Eustorgius, Milan, about the end of the fourteenth century.

To quench his thirst for holiness he drank deeply of penance and prayer, those two fountains of sanctity, purifying both by long fasts and severe abstinence. To these means of arriving at holiness he added a very rigid observance of the vow of poverty he had taken at his religious profession, and a continual practise of humility, and its offspring, virginal chastity. Unruffled patience, and well tried prudence, combined with every christian virtue and monastic perfection, made him in truth a very holy man. To all these acquired virtues were joined a fine intellect and ready comprehension, with many other natural talents of no mean order. Powerful in words

and deeds, Blessed Christopher soon after his ordination became well known, and his fame was universal in the north of Italy. He was an apostolic preacher, and by his sermons converted many sinners, and worked a great moral change wherever he went. Neither difficulties nor fatigue could daunt him; a messenger of the mercy of God he was always ready to go at once when called to any labor for the good of souls. The difficulty of travelling, much greater in those days than now, could not hinder him, even when he had to pass through wild districts in which roads were few, and often exceedingly dangerous.

He evangelized many parts of Italy, but more especially Liguria. In 1406 he went to preach at Taggia, where his success was even greater than usual. The inhabitants were so charmed by his sanctity and preaching, that they determined to build a monastery and church for him. They were speedily erected and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of Mother of Mercy, and were built on a site made known to him in a vision. A marked improvement was soon seen in the people of Taggia, and many of the most

prominent citizens, bidding adieu to the pleasures of life, entered the Dominican Order, that under his guidance they might make real progress in the ways of true perfection.

God endowed him with prophecy. One day he saw the people dancing in the square at Castellano. "I see you now," he said, "dancing merrily; yet your ruin is not far off, and your joy will soon be changed into grief." And in fact a fearful plague carried off the greater part of the population of the town only a few years afterwards. He predicted that the town of Trioria would be burnt down, which happened when the French invaded Italy. They gave the town up to pillage, set it on fire, and reduced it to ashes. A famine predicted by him happened soon after his death. To the inhabitants of Taggia he foretold that they would flee from the town, although not pursued, and that the river which flowed through its walls would leave its bed, and destroy their gardens. When they seemed incredulous he said, "You yourselves will see it, and many other misfortunes which I do not now make known to you." Both these predictions were verified to the letter. About

seven years before he spoke, Constantinople had fallen under the Turkish yoke, and Italy was menaced with invasion. But as the danger seemed far off nothing was done to avert it. In 1480, twenty years after Blessed Christopher had uttered this prophecy, a Turkish fleet appeared in sight of the Italian coast, and finding no opposition the troops were landed at Otranto. Twelve thousand Christians were killed or made prisoners, and every priest was slain. A Dominican Father of Otranto was in the pulpit preaching when the Turks entered the town. He continued his sermon: The Turks rushing into the church commanded him to come down; and on his refusal he was cut in two, and died murmuring! "Holy faith! holy faith, holy faith!" Italy was convulsed with fear at the news of this invasion. Taggia like many other towns was deserted, and thus the first part of Blessed Christopher's prediction came true. The flood also happened as he said. The neighboring mountains partially crumbled away; immense rocks rolled down their sides and falling into the bed of the river forced the water to overflow the plains, caus-

ing the utmost destruction. The smiling valley became a sad picture of desolation, houses were ruined, gardens destroyed, and the walls of the town broken down.

Blessed Christopher's holy life and his fervent preaching gave him a wonderful influence over the hearts and affections of the people. But, as his biographers are careful to tell us, it was the solidity of his doctrine that caused his great success. His sermons were full of dogma, and it may be truly said of him that he fed the people with the bread of life, and announced to them the pure word of God. When he was Prior of Taggia, he ordered that all the Fathers of the monastery should study the Holy Scriptures every day ; also that they should read the works of the Holy Fathers of the church, especially those of the angelic Doctor Saint Thomas Aquinas, instead of spending their time in reading the works of popular authors, so that their sermons, like his own, might be full of sound doctrine, and that the intellects as well as the hearts of the people might be convinced by their sermons. He was very indignant at those preachers who, disdaining the Gospel of the day, and neglect-

ing the Holy Scriptures, preached new-fangled notions of their own. His own sermons were models in this respect, full of the words of Holy Scripture and quotations from Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers of the church. This was chiefly due to his constant study of the "Catena Aurea," or "Golden Chain," written by Saint Thomas, comprising selections from the Greek and Latin Fathers.

He himself compiled four large volumes for the use of preachers, which were preserved in the monastery library. The first and second volumes contained sermons for all the Sundays and feasts of the whole year; the third consisted of sermons for the feasts of the Saints; while the fourth was a collection of extracts from the Fathers.

In 1484 he went to preach a course of sermons during Lent at Pigna, near Ventimiglia, during which he fell sick, and feeling conscious that his death was drawing near he begged to be taken to Taggia without delay, so that he might die surrounded by his dear Brothers in religion. Overtaken by a severe storm he arrived at the monastery wet to the skin. The Prior immediately administered to him

the last sacraments, and soon after he gave his holy soul into the hands of his Creator. Miracles rendered his memory illustrious, and from that day he has always been honored as a Saint. He was not beatified however until 1875.

Faithful to his baptismal vows Christ reigned in his heart; His name was ever on his lips, and He lived again in all his actions; and having been an example to us on earth he now makes intercession for us with Christ in heaven.

Prayer.

Ant. I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Christopher

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast rendered Blessed Christopher, Thy confessor, worthy to be Thy servant, grant that by his merits, and by imitating him we may carry Christ in ourselves by the whole intention of our minds and affections of our hearts, who livest and reignest, etc. Amen.

BLESSED HENRY SUSO.

BLESSED HENRY SUSO.

MARCH 2.

HE who attempts to write the life of Blessed Henry Suso would do well to imitate the piety of the quaint authors of olden times, who began their labors with a prayer for heavenly guidance, and closed them with a pious petition to their readers not to forget the writer in their prayers. He also who reads it should do so, not to pass away an idle hour, but from an earnest desire to learn something for the good of his soul. "Worldly minded men," says Tournon, "will not enjoy his life and writings; while the pious will always find in them new motives which will lead them to tend to that perfection which dwelt in the heart of this servant of God."

Blessed Henry Suso was born at Uberlingen, near Constance, in Suabia, March 21, 1300. He was of noble family. His name before he entered religion was John de Berg de Mon-

teze; but he chose to be called Henry Suso, Suzo being the Latinized form of Saüssen, his mother's family name. She was a saintly woman who suffered much from her dissolute husband. She had a great and tender devotion to the Passion of our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, upon which she made a tearful meditation every morning. Her love for God was so great that her weak body could not bear the strain her exalted piety put upon it, and she underwent many a long and severe sickness, which she bore so patiently, that her household was much edified. One day, kneeling before a picture of Jesus taken down from the cross, her grief became so extreme that she fell fainting on the ground. She was carried to her bed, which she never again left. It was at the beginning of Lent, and on Good Friday, at the same hour at which her Divine Redeemer died on the cross she passed away from this world.

Some years afterwards, when Blessed Henry had entered the Dominican Order and was making his studies at Cologne, his mother's soul appeared to him in a vision, and said in a joyful tone, "My son, love the Almighty God, for it

is certain that He will never abandon thee in any adversity. Although I have left this world, nevertheless I am not dead. I live in God for all eternity." She embraced him tenderly, and after blessing him disappeared.

At another time he saw his deceased father among many other suffering souls. He was in great pain, and described to his son the torments of purgatory. He told him what he should do to relieve him, and when Blessed Henry had done all that he requested, appeared to him a second time and told him that he was delivered from all suffering and was now happy in heaven.

Blessed Henry, profiting by the pious education given him by his holy mother, from his childhood felt called to the religious state. He entered the Dominican Order in the monastery at Constance, built on a small island where the Rhine flows out of the beautiful lake of the same name. It is still in existence, but no longer used for its original purpose, and now serves for a manufactory. From the window of his cell the young novice could see the beauty of the works of God; everything his eye fell on was fitted to lead his mind to

the author of nature, to draw away his thoughts and affections from earthly things, and to fix his heart and mind on God.

After he had made his profession he was sent to the Dominican monastery at Cologne, that he might study at the University, and was about to be raised to the degree of Doctor in Theology when he was interiorly admonished by God not to accept that dignity. "Thou already knowest," said this heavenly voice, "how to give thyself to God, and to draw other men to Him by preaching."

For several years after his entrance into the monastery he seems to have made little effort to live as a true religious; but in his eighteenth year a great change took place in him. The account of this, the turning point of his life, cannot be better given than in words from his autobiography. "The first beginning of the Servitor's perfect conversion to God took place in his eighteenth year; and although he had worn the religious habit for the five previous years his soul was dissipated within him, and it seemed to him that if God only preserved him from weightier sins which might tarnish his good name, there was no

need to be overcareful about ordinary faults. Nevertheless he was so kept by God the while that he had always an unsatisfied feeling within him, whenever he turned himself to the object of his desires, and it seemed to him that it must be something quite different that could bring peace to his wild heart, and he was ill at ease amid his restful ways. He felt at times a gnawing reproach within, and yet he could not help himself, until the kind God set him free from it by converting him. His companions marvelled at the quick change, wondering how it had come over him, and one said this, and another that, but as to how it was no one guessed or came near to guessing ; for it was a secret illumination and drawing sent by God, and it speedily wrought in him a turning away from creatures."

It was however a hard struggle for him, as it is for many a soul, but he weathered the storm which his spiritual enemy raised around him, and saved himself from the shipwreck which threatened his salvation. The devil made every effort to hinder him from carrying out the good resolutions the Spirit of God inspired into his heart. He whispered to him, "Re-

member it is easy to begin, but almost impossible to persevere." But Blessed Henry, strong in the grace of God, and resolute in his holy purpose, answered, "The Holy Ghost, who calls me is all-powerful, He can do in me what is easy and what is difficult." But again the tempter whispered to him, "No one can doubt God's power, but can you count on corresponding to His grace?" Blessed Henry replied, "God who calls me will not abandon me; He invites me to serve Him, and will not refuse me needful help." Then the devil plied him with all the old arguments he makes use of to hinder souls from giving themselves to God with all their heart and soul: that his conversion was too sudden and would not last; that moderation is the best means of success; that no one becomes a saint all at once; that although religious are free to live a strict and mortified life in private yet in public they ought to conform to the ways of the world, and so on. But on the other side the spirit of heavenly wisdom said to him: "He who thinks he can subdue his body and reduce it to the law of the spirit whilst living delicately and indulging the

senses is very foolish ; for it is impossible to enjoy worldly pleasures and serve God faithfully at the same time. He who desires to serve God must begin by renouncing his own self-will."

One day, as he was weeping in the church in great perplexity of mind God favored him with a vision, in which, to encourage and console him He made known to him the inutterable joys of heaven. This was the beginning of a series of visions of exquisite poetic beauty, which continued throughout his whole life. Hearing a part of the Holy Scriptures read in the refectory, in which our Lord is called the "Eternal Wisdom," he felt his heart violently but lovingly attracted towards the Eternal Wisdom, and from that moment his life became a strong and earnest struggle to possess it. "My heart, young and ardent," he says, "is drawn towards love. I cannot live without loving. Created things cannot please me, nor give me peace." He much loved to repeat those words of Holy Scripture, which describe the pure joys of heavenly wisdom : "Wisdom is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the skies ; being

compared with the light she is found before it." (Wisdom vii. 29.) "Her have I loved, and I have sought her from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of her beauty." (Cap. viii. 2.) "I purposed therefore to take her to me to live with me, knowing that she will communicate to me of her good things, and will be a comfort to me in my cares and griefs." (viii. 9.) "By means of her I shall have immortality; and shall leave behind me an everlasting memory to them that come after me." (Ver. 13.)

But the infernal serpent tried to rob his young soul of the pure delight he found in the love of the Eternal Wisdom. "What folly," he cunningly suggested, "what folly to love what you have never seen! It is much wiser to possess a small but certain good than to try to get what at best is doubtful. The Eternal Wisdom you so much long for demands of her lovers that they become enemies of themselves, deprives them of sleep, starves them, and destroys all their pleasures." But Henry, already enlightened and instructed in the maxims of heavenly wisdom, answered: "It

is a law of love that he who truly loves must suffer pain. See how much earthly lovers undergo! 'I have found a woman more bitter than death,' said Ecclesiastes, 'she is the hunter's snare, and her heart is a net, and her hands are bands. He that pleaseth God shall escape from her, but he that is a sinner shall be caught by her.' " (Eccles. vii. 27.)

Yet his heart, not yet perfectly cleansed from things of earth, yearned to see the heavenly Bride he had espoused; and God, in His fatherly goodness granted his desire. She appeared to him, but afar off. Raised on a column of cloud, of majesty unutterable, shining brighter than the morning sun, like a pure and charming virgin, she gained his heart by her sweetness and pure attractions. He threw himself in spirit at her feet, and cried out, "I have chosen you for my beloved, for the queen of my heart." Again and again was this vision vouchsafed him, and again and again the Eternal Wisdom delighted his pure and virginal soul, and again and again he chose her for his only love and the spouse of his heart.

He had a very great devotion to the adorable name of Jesus. One day he took a sharp pointed knife and pierced the holy name on his flesh above his heart, so that at every beat he might, as it were, pronounce this holy name. And then, in a transport of love, he cried out, "Ah Lord! my heart and soul's only love! look now upon my intense desire. Lord! I cannot imprint Thee any deeper in myself; but do Thou, O Lord, I beseech Thee, complete the work, and imprint Thyself deep down into my very inmost heart, and so inscribe Thy holy name that Thou mayest nevermore depart from me."

He kept this a secret, and, except to one very intimate friend, revealed it to no one. Whenever he was in any trouble he bared his breast and gazed on the Holy Name written there, and cried out, "See, Lord, earthly lovers write their beloved's name upon their garments, but I have written Thee upon the fresh blood of my heart." Once upon a time he was wrapped into ecstasy, and saw a light stream forth from his heart so brilliant that although he drew his cloak over it, he could not hide it. A cross of gold appeared over

his heart, and the Holy Name of Jesus sparkled from jewels set upon it.

Many years afterwards, a certain holy maiden saw in a vision the Blessed Virgin, holding a beautiful candle in her hand which illumined the whole world. And all around the light which streamed from the candle she saw the Holy Name of Jesus. And the Blessed mother told her that her Divine Son had chosen Henry to spread devotion to His Holy Name. This devout maiden wrote the Holy Name of Jesus on a small piece of cloth like a scapular and always wore it near her heart. She also made many like it, and persuaded Blessed Henry to bless them, and to lay them on his bare breast. It was revealed to her that all who wore them, and said one "Our Father" daily in honor of the Holy Name, would be beloved by God on earth, and would find grace at the hour of death.

It was Blessed Henry's custom to salute Mary, the star of heaven, early in the morning, singing in his soul a sweet canticle, in loving imitation of the birds that greet the rising sun in the summer morn. And as he was doing so one morning he heard a melodious voice

singing these words: "Mary, star of the sea, has risen to-day;" and the glorious Queen of Heaven said to him, "The more thou dost lovingly embrace me on earth, the more tenderly I will embrace thee in heaven."

Another morning, in Carnival time, after spending the whole night in prayer, the angels sang to him as the morn arose, "Arise and be illuminated, O Jerusalem." (Isaias lxi.) This chant caused such a joy in his heart that his frail body could not bear such a strain, and the angels were forced to cease. The souls of the dead often appeared to him and revealed to him the state they were in. Among them he saw the soul of the celebrated mystical writer Echardt. He told Blessed Henry that he was happy in heaven, inundated with joy, and all transformed in God. Henry asked him to tell him the most efficacious method of arriving at perfect beatitude. Echardt answered, "It is to die to one's self by detachment; to receive all that happens as if from the hands of God; and to be patient towards all men, however selfish they may be." Blessed Henry also asked him about the mode in which holy souls rest in God, and was

answered that no words could explain it. From the soul of a Dominican Brother, John de Furcrer, he desired to learn the greatest and most meritorious suffering the just can endure, and was told: "It is when one finds one's self abandoned by God, when one forgets one's self and bears this abandonment patiently, thus leaving God for God."

Blessed Henry had a very dear friend in whom he confided much, and to whom he revealed all his secrets, even showing him the Holy Name of Jesus he had pierced over his heart. One day they made an agreement that whoever survived should say two Masses every week as long as he lived for his friend's soul. Many years afterward the friend died, when Blessed Henry, although he prayed for his soul every day, forgot his promise to say the Masses. One morning, as he was praying in the choir, the soul of his friend appeared to him, and said, "Alas, my friend! how soon you have forgotten me." Blessed Henry answered, "Nay, for I remember you daily in my prayers." The soul answered: "This is not sufficient; fulfil what you promised about saying the Masses for me, so that the precious

blood of Christ may assuage the severity of the sufferings of purgatory, and in this way I may soon become free." Blessed Henry did so, and soon afterwards it was made known to him that his friend was liberated from purgatory, and entered into heaven.

But it was not by visions and spiritual graces alone that Blessed Henry became sanctified. Every action of his life, no matter how small, was part of a continual worship of God, and was rendered a means of uniting himself to his Creator. Whether he ate or drank, or whatever he did, it was all for the honor of God. The life of a conscientious religious, living in his quiet and peaceful cloister, is a series of ordinary actions, beautified however and sanctified by a holy intention. Blessed Henry has left us a record of how he spent his days and hours. The catechism tells us that we can, nay ought, to make our ordinary actions, even our eating and drinking holy; and in the life of this great servant of God we learn how it may be done. At table Blessed Henry placed himself in spirit face to face with Jesus, and imagined that his Divine Lord honored him by becom-

ing his guest. He turned the eyes of his soul unceasingly to Him as he ate, and often bent his head towards Him on the side of His sacred heart. He offered to Him his food and drink, begging him to bless them. When he quenched his thirst, which he did very sparingly, he drank five times in honor of the five wounds of our beloved Redeemer, dividing the last draught into two, in memory of the double stream of water and blood which flowed from our Saviour's side as he hung on the cross. He digested every mouthful with some pious thought, but he always ate the first and last piece in union with the heart most loving on earth, and the most ardent seraphim in heaven, and besought God to penetrate his soul with these two loves. When he found any food distasteful he hid it in the bleeding heart of Jesus, and then courageously swallowed it.

His devotion to the holy mother of God was one of the motive powers of his soul, and there are many examples of the way he practised it. But there is one so characteristic that it cannot be omitted. As he was out walking one day in the country he met a poor

woman, and the path being too narrow for both to pass at the same time he stepped out of the way, although in order to do so he had to wet his feet. The woman turned round and said, "How comes it that you, a priest, give way to a poor woman like me, who ought rather to give way to you?" Blessed Henry answered, "For the sake of the gentle Mother of God in heaven it is my custom to pay deference to all women." And the woman, lifting up her eyes and hands to heaven, said, "May the Blessed Virgin not allow you to leave this life until you have received some special grace from her whom you honor in us women." And he answered, "May the pure maiden and Mother Mary in heaven, grant me this."

Blessed Henry has left us in his autobiography a beautiful example of the way in which we can celebrate the feasts of the great mysteries of our holy religion. For the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary he prepared himself three days in advance to receive her in the temple. He burnt a triple candle on those three days in honor of her virginity, humility, and motherhood, and said

the "Magnificat" three times each day. On the morning of the feast, before the people came to the church, he prostrated himself in front of the high altar, and there meditated on the glories of Mary at that time when she carried her Divine Son into the temple. Then in spirit he called upon all pious souls to sing the hymn "Inviolata" with her at the door of the temple. At the last words he prayed Mary to have compassion on him, and then rose and followed her to the altar, carrying a candle in his hands. When Mary offered her Divine Son to Simeon, he humbly asked her to show him her dear child, and to trust the Babe to him for a moment. At last he returned the child to its mother, and remained in spirit with her until all was accomplished.

He kept two carnivals: one by meditation on the folly of those who purchase for themselves an eternity of misery by indulging in sinful pleasure, and he said the "Miserere" as an act of reparation for all the dishonor offered to God in the carnival time. The other was a carnival of holy delight, in which he made merry with God, and became full of joy when he thought of heaven. As a reward

for his piety God granted him an ecstasy, in which he heard the melodious voice of a youth of twelve, singing so sweetly that no human voice could compare with it. When the song ended, the youth, although invisible, presented Blessed Henry with a basket of delicious fruit like strawberries. Afterwards, at Henry's earnest desire he made himself visible: it was our Divine Lord Himself. He looked at Henry very affectionately, blessed him and then disappeared.

In the month of May, when young people carried boughs of blossom, singing and dancing, Henry chose the Holy Cross for his May bough, thinking that neither the fields nor the forests could produce so beautiful a tree, nor one so laden with fruit or flowers. And as he carried the cross for a May bough he sang the beautiful Latin hymn from the office of the church, "Salve Crux," "Hail, O holy cross! hail, glory of the world!" adding, "Hail, heavenly tree of eternal salvation, on which ripens the fruit of wisdom!"

In the beginning of his turning to God with all his heart he was favored with many heavenly consolations, but after a while God warned

him that he could not reach heaven except by walking on the rough way of the cross. From that time he retired every morning into a corner of the chapter room, to meditate on the Passion of his Divine Saviour. Commencing at the last supper he followed his Lord from one place to another, attending at his judgment, carrying His cross like Simon of Cyrene, and kneeling to kiss the bloody footmarks of his suffering God. He reflected that he ought, after the example of Jesus, to be ready to give up everything for God : his friends, his goods, and enjoyments; and that he ought to trample all honors under his feet. When he saw our Divine Lord given up to death he saluted the divine victim, and asked the grace to die with Him. Then he turned his thoughts to the Blessed Mother, who made so great a sacrifice for us, and after her sad farewell to her Divine Son hanging on the cross, he tenderly consoled her, and led her back to her home.

Meditation on the Passion of Jesus made him practise most rigorous mortifications and penances. He began by restraining his tongue, the **most** difficult penance one can perform. He observed the law of silence enjoined by

the Dominican rule, and for thirty years never spoke at table even outside the monastery except once, when he dined on board a ship. When called to the guest rooms he received every one kindly, but quickly dismissed them, and having sent them away consoled, he gladly returned to his cell. He wore an iron chain and a hair shirt, which later on in life he replaced by one made of cords, in which he fastened a hundred and fifty iron points, so sharp that his body became covered with wounds. Before he went to sleep he tied his arms with thongs of leather, and fastened them with a padlock; but after some time he left his hands free, and wore gloves covered with iron points; thus his hands were like bears' paws, that scratched him if he touched himself while asleep. He also wore a wooden cross on his shoulders, in which he placed thirty nails, in honor of the wounds and bruises our Lord suffered for us. He disciplined himself with a severity greater than a bitter enemy could have shown him. His bed was a door on which he spread an old mat, only long enough to reach his knees, and his bolster was a sack of oats. He usually lay down to sleep clothed just as

he was in the daytime, and with all his instruments of penance upon him. For twenty-five years he never went near a fire. He took only one meal a day, ate neither fish nor eggs, contenting himself with bread, beans, and fruits. He drank wine only once a year, on Easter Sunday, took but very little water, and then only at dinner, no matter how thirsty he became. This he found his greatest penance. One day, suffering much from thirst, he heard an interior voice saying, "Remember how terrible was My thirst when I hung on the cross. Although I am the creator of all the fountains of cool water I could only obtain gall and vinegar to quench My thirst. Bear then patiently the thirst you now feel if you wish to follow in My footsteps."

When he had practised all these penances for twenty years, God commanded him to abandon them and to enter into a more perfect way, the way of spiritual sufferings. "I wish," said our Saviour to him, "to show you three crosses I have prepared for you. The first will be this. Heretofore you have struck yourself with your own hands, and ceased when you took pity on yourself. Now you will be in the hands of

others, without power to defend yourself. Moreover you will lose the esteem of many, and this will be more painful than the cross full of nails you wore on your back. You have been admired for your mortifications, henceforth you will be despised and turned into ridicule by every one. The second cross will be this. Although you have born many cruel mortifications you have kept your kind and loving heart, and have met with affection from very many. But just where you have found confidence, esteem, and love you will meet with great unfaithfulness; and all those who continue true to you will have to suffer for it. And the last cross will be this. Until now you have been like a child at the breast, and have swum in divine sweetness like a fish in the ocean. I will withdraw my graces and consolations; you will be abandoned by God and man, tormented by your friends as well as by your enemies, and everything you will seek to console yourself with will turn against you."

But when Blessed Henry, hearing these words began to tremble, a voice within him said, "Take courage! for I will be with you, and make you victorious in all your combats."

Still, when injured by his own friends he often became discouraged. On one of these occasions he heard this reproach in the centre of his soul: "Did *I* turn away my head when men injured Me and spat in My face?" Then he went to find those who had ill-treated him, and spoke sweetly to them. The heaviest temptations he had to bear were those against faith, the deep sadness he felt for eight years, and the fear that after all he would be damned.

God did not wish that this holy and fervent man should hide his talents in obscurity. He sent him to labor for the salvation of souls, but tried him as before in the crucible of suffering. In the town of Constance there was a crucifix of the exact size, it was said, of our Divine Lord. One day during Lent fresh blood was seen to fall from the wound in the side. Blessed Henry went to see it, and took some of the blood on his finger to examine it. The bystanders asked his opinion whether it was a true miracle. He said he could not decide. Then his enemies spread about the report that he had cut his finger and pretended that the blood had come from the crucifix, to gain

money from the people. This calumny spread abroad into the whole country. The inhabitants of Constance became embittered against him, and for fear of his life he was obliged to flee in the darkness of the night. His enemies offered a large reward to any one who would take him, alive or dead. When any of his friends dared to defend him they were quickly silenced, and they thought it prudent to hold their peace. A pious lady of the city advised him to draw up a legal document asserting his innocence, but he said, "Good lady! if I had no more to suffer than this I would willingly do what you advise; but I prefer to trust myself to God alone, for my whole life is one long suffering."

When he went to the Netherlands to assist at a chapter of the order he found a new cross awaiting him. He was formally accused before his superiors of having written books full of heretical doctrine, and was severely reprimanded, and threatened with punishment, although he was entirely innocent. Yet more was in store for him. On his way back he was seized with a violent fever. An abscess formed near his heart, and his state became so grave

that his companions believed that he was on the point of death.

One night, which he passed in a strange monastery, he could not sleep for thinking of his sorrows, and lovingly complained to God. And it seemed to him that his cell became filled with legions of angels who sang sweet songs to console him; and as they sang one angel came near him and said, "Why do you not sing with us?" Sighing, Blessed Henry made answer, "Do you not know how much I am suffering? did you ever know a dying man to sing? Formerly I did sing, and joyfully too, but now all I wish for is to die." The angel answered, "Be strong and do manfully. You will not die yet, you will live, and then you will sing such a song that God will be glorified by it, and many a sufferer will be consoled." In a moment Blessed Henry's eyes were filled with tears, the abscess opened, and he was cured.

But another bitter trial befell him. His sister, a nun, led away by love for company, fell into grievous sin, and overcome by shame fled from her convent. On his return Blessed Henry was told of it, and went about as if out

of his mind. He asked advice from the Fathers, who all repulsed him, and seemed as if ashamed of him. He did not lose courage however, and set off to search for the lost sheep and found her in a cottage. When he saw her he fell fainting at her feet, from emotion; but having come to himself again, he embraced her and conjured her to abandon her sin, and by his kind and loving entreaties led her back again to a convent of strict observance, where by penance and prayer she made amends for the scandal she had given, led a saintly life, and died a holy death.

In truth, he had so many crosses to bear, and so much to suffer that when they ceased for a time, as sometimes happened, he used to say that all was going badly with him.

One day as he was praying, he begged God to make known to him what special graces are granted to those who suffer much for His sake. He was answered in a vision, "Learn that all my servants who are dead to themselves and risen again with me, enjoy three special graces: First, All they wish for I grant to their prayers. Second, I give them an inward peace which neither angels nor men

can take from them. The last grace is an abundance of sweetness and divine caresses, so that they become one with Me."

On account of his eminent wisdom, great virtue, and a particular gift of converting sinners he was sent to preach in Germany. He became one of the most celebrated preachers of his time. His powerful words moved every heart, turned the most vicious from their evil ways, and persuaded them to embrace a virtuous life. Tournon, in his "Lives of celebrated Dominicans," says that Blessed Henry preached thirty-seven years, from 1328 to 1365. God granted him the grace of working miracles during his apostolic missions. Preaching one day at Cologne his face became thrice as brilliant as the sun, and all who saw it were filled with astonishment. He restored a number of sick people to perfect health, for every grace he asked from God was granted. But he did not enjoy the pure delights of the apostolate without experiencing his usual trials. Having learnt that a woman who was under his spiritual direction, whom he believed he had converted from an evil life, was secretly continuing her sinful course, he felt obliged to discon-

tinue giving her alms as he had formerly done. This wicked woman then publicly declared that Blessed Henry was father to her child. One of his friends took the child to him: he received it into his arms. The babe smiled at him: he caressed it and said, "Poor child! your father will not acknowledge you, and your cruel mother has abandoned you. God wishes me to be a father to you; I am glad to obey. You shall be God's child and mine. May God bless you! may the angels protect you! for God's honor I will do all I can for you." And he adopted it from that day. In course of time the wicked mother, ashamed of herself, went away. Nevertheless the calumny was believed. The Master General of the order heard of it, and this was Blessed Henry's cruelest suffering. He was tempted to despair, and began to complain to the tender heart of Jesus, who in due time made his innocence known. The wicked woman came to an evil end, and those who had believed the calumny and had persecuted him died without the sacraments. Among his enemies was a prelate, whose soul appeared after death to Blessed Henry and told him that God had

taken him from earth on this account, and that he had to suffer a long time in purgatory for having persecuted him.

He was once elected Prior. This is an office full of grave responsibility ; but as the monastery was heavily burdened with debt it was more especially so at that time. In the first chapter he held he declared that all must confide in the promise made by Saint Dominic as he was dying, never to abandon his children in their needs. He ordered special prayers to be said, and a Mass sung next day in honor of Saint Dominic. Some of the Fathers murmured, and one said, "See what a foolish man this Prior is! Does he imagine that God will send down meat and drink from heaven?" The Father to whom he spoke said, "He is not the only fool. We are all fools for having elected him Prior, though we well knew that he does nothing but gape up to heaven." The next morning while the Mass was being sung, a pious canon, one of Blessed Henry's friends, came to the monastery and gave him a large sum of money ; and during the whole time he was Prior the community wanted for nothing, and the debt was completely cleared off.

After having labored holily in the service of God's holy church; having made meditation on the passion and death of Christ his daily task; having loved God with the purest and most disinterested love; borne solitude, fasting, penances, and temptations; having been defamed and slandered by every one, friends as well as enemies; having, in one word, been conformed to the crucified figure of his Saviour, Blessed Henry, despising life and all on fire with desire of heaven, died, in the midst of universal regret, in the monastery of Saint Paul in Ulm, rich in merits and fortified with all the sacraments of the church, January 25th, 1365.

His holy body was buried in the cloister of the same monastery, and many miracles were worked there. The Dominican Order asked his canonization at the same time that it petitioned that of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In the year 1613, two hundred and forty years after his death, some laborers digging the foundations of a new building, found his body, clothed in the habit of the order, incorrupt, and emitting a sweet smell. The Burgo-master ordered the tomb to be closed, and all

trace of it has been lost. But, while the workmen were absent, a devout person descended into the tomb and cut off some pieces from the cappa and scapular, and for many years these holy relics were piously preserved. Pope Gregory XVI. gave permission to the Dominican Order to keep his feast on the second day of March every year.

Blessed Henry wrote several very valuable spiritual works, which are held in the highest esteem. The principal one, which was as well known in the middle ages as the "Imitation of Christ" is in our times, is the "Little Book of Eternal Wisdom," formally called, "The Clock of Eternal Wisdom." It is a collection of delightful teachings on the various phases of spiritual life. He also wrote a "Treatise on the Union of the Soul with God," "The Colloquy of the Seven Rocks," in allegorical form, some "Spiritual Discourses," "Meditations on the Three Hours of Agony," "A soliloquy on the Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the dolours of Jesus and Mary," "A Spiritual Exercise on the Eternal Wisdom," "Sentences from the Holy Fathers," and the "Office of the Eternal Wisdom."

His letters have also been collected and published. The writings of his spiritual daughter, Sister Elizabeth Staglin, of the convent of Saint Dominic of Thoez, near Winterhür are extant. They consist of his life, written by himself, and other remembrances of him. All his works, except the "Little Book of Eternal Wisdom" were written in German; that he wrote in Latin. They have been translated into Latin, French, Italian, and some of them into English. Surius says of them, "I have read many books which lead sinners to shed tears for their sins and cause them sincerely to repent, but I have never found any among them which so powerfully excite the heart to higher perfection of the spiritual life, nor so calculated to touch the hardest hearts, as those of Blessed Henry Suso, provided that one reads them carefully.

Prayer.

Ant. All wisdom is from the Lord God, and hath ever been with Him, and is before all time.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Henry.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who didst make Blessed Henry, Thy confessor, wonderful for charity and bodily mortification, grant that in all our works we may have the marks of the crucified Christ upon us, and ever bear his love in our hearts. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSED JORDAN OF PISA.

BLESSED JORDAN OF PISA.

MARCH 6.

BLESSED JORDAN of Pisa was born about the middle of the thirteenth century ; but where, or in what year, is not known. Neither have we any details of his youth. But from the following passage in one of his sermons, it is conjectured that he was studying at the University of Paris in the year 1276. In a sermon on the saints in heaven he said: "Consider a man who has gained the friendship of the King of France ; what honor is there he will not receive? I have seen such a man with my own eyes. A man of mean and low extraction learnt how to enter into friendship with the king. The whole court, all the barons, bowed before him, gave him incredible respect and honor, merely because he was the king's friend. But," added the holy preacher, the kings of this world are only worms in God's sight. If then they who obtain their friendship receive

such honors, who can tell the honor and glory which God will grant His friends?" These words evidently refer to Peter de la Brosse, who from being hairdresser to King Louis, became the confidential friend of King Philip the Hardy.

Blessed Jordan entered the Dominican Order at Pisa in 1280. Having manifested great talent he was sent to complete his studies in the University of Paris, where he attended the lectures of the most renowned masters.

On his return to Italy he taught philosophy and theology in several Dominican monasteries, and at length returned to Pisa, at that time the principal house of studies of the province. Here, as elsewhere, he became remarkable as a profound theologian as well as a good religious. We next find him preaching in Florence; and in the Dominican Provincial chapter held in Rieti, in 1305, he was appointed first lector or professor. He held that office three years, and raised the studies to so high a degree of excellence that the monastery of Santa Maria Novella became famous throughout Italy.

At the same time that he taught in the

Dominican schools of theology he gave himself with great energy to preaching. He was in heart and soul a true Dominican, sowing the seed of the word all around him. "Without preaching," he once said in a sermon, "who knows into what darkness and heresies we should fall! We should be like the Greeks, invaded by multitudes of errors, because they have no preachers. We should become like the Turks, Tartars, and pagans." In a panegyric on Saint Dominic, after praising his heroic virtues, the greatest praise he could give him was for having instituted the Dominican order, thus having procured for the people the advantage of an order of preachers; and he often said that Saint Dominic deserved to be ranked next to the Apostles and to Saint Augustine. In another sermon he said, "One cannot express how useful this servant of God, Dominic, was to the church. Before him there were scarcely any preachers: to day the world is full of them. Hardly any schools of theology existed before his time; at the present they fill the whole of christendom. Every monastery possesses its own school, a most useful thing. Before him only Bishops announced the word of

God; it was their own proper office. Priest, monks and hermits preached by example. That was why the Pope was astonished when Saint Dominic went to make known to him his plans of establishing an order of preachers. "What!" thought the Vicar of Christ, "does he wish to found an order of which every member is a Bishop!" and he hesitated to give his approbation. But the following night he saw in a dream the church of Saint John Lateran in danger of falling into ruins, but upheld by Saint Dominic. Understanding from this the benefit which the servant of God would confer on the whole church by his preaching and by that of his children, he granted the approbation which had been asked from the Apostolic See."

Nature and grace alike had formed Jordan for a great preacher. Full of sound Catholic doctrine, well read in classic literature, versed in ancient and modern languages, the Holy Scriptures familiar to him, and with the greatest intricacies of theology at his finger ends, energetic and zealous, it would have been strange if he had not succeeded. Like all the saints and learned men of the Dominican Order he con-

stantly and most lovingly studied the Holy Scriptures, especially the Epistles of Saint Paul. "The more I read them," he said, the more delight and joy I find for my soul in them. Saint Thomas Aquinas professed such respect for them that when he saw the Book of the Gospels in the sacristy he knelt down and kissed it, and always showed it the greatest respect. The epistles are so full of delight, so sweet, and at the same time so profound, that they are truly marvels. There is not a word in them that is not like a burning coal, capable of inspiring us with holy ardor. This Apostle delighted in recalling Jesus Christ to mind, and I find that he has mentioned him no less than five hundred and thirty-two times." Not content with reading the Holy Scripture assiduously, Blessed Jordan used his extraordinary memory by learning them by heart. "He knew by heart," says Father Dominic de Peccioli, in his chronicle of the Dominican Monastery of Pisa, "the Breviary, the Missal, the greater part of the Bible with the marginal commentary, the second part of the Summa of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and many other things."

Blessed Jordan of Pisa then was very learned.

But learning alone will never make a preacher ; holiness must accompany and chasten human knowledge in him who desires to preach the word of God worthily. He was as holy as he was learned. His confidence in the goodness of God and in the power of prayer was unbounded. His was the faith which moves mountains. In one of his sermons he says, "when you pray thus I guarantee you, by the promise of Christ, by the Holy Scriptures, by all the Saints, and on my soul, that you will obtain all you ask. The heavens and the earth would perish sooner than your prayers would not be heard." The goodness of God was one of his favorite subjects. "One could preach thirty sermons," he said, "on the blessings which God showers down on us even in the natural order."

Towards Saint Dominic, the glorious founder of the religious order he had entered, he had an exceedingly strong and earnest devotion. Saint Dominic's name was always on his lips, and he never lost an opportunity of praising him and proposing his virtues for imitation. But what can be said to describe his devotion to the Blessed Mother of God ! The chronicle

of the monastery, so scanty in details of his life, is full of mention of his devotion towards the immaculate Queen of Heaven. It tells us that it was invariably Blessed Jordan who was the first to commence the office of the Blessed Virgin when it was said in the dormitory, and that he said it in a voice so fervent, loud, and clear, and so piously, that every one was filled with the same fervor he himself felt. The Blessed Virgin rewarded his filial devotion by granting him many favors. One day, seated in the refectory, he saw the Queen of Heaven escorted by angels, carrying food to her devoted children, the sons of Saint Dominic. In an excess of goodness she served at table. Those hands that had in so many ways served her divine Son when He was on earth now gave food to her spiritual sons, the Friars. One can easily imagine how Blessed Jordan's heart was inflamed with gratitude at the sight of so great a favor from God's own mother.

During his labors of teaching and preaching he did not relax the fervor and regularity of religious discipline and monastic observance. Preaching once on the Last Judgment he was led to speak of the rigor of observance in his

beloved monastery. "You secular people little know what the judgment is. We religious know it well. If you commit a sin, grave sin although it may be, you are neither corrected nor chastised; no one will upbraid you. But we are punished for the least fault, and appear in judgment. Thus he who is conscious of being guilty of some omission feels great fear when he hears the chapter bell ring, for he knows that he goes there to be accused. A father of the order, forty years of age, once said to me, "I do not feel in fault, but I am seized with vivid fear when I hear the chapter bell ring."

Naturally eloquent, solid in doctrine, rich in virtue, beloved by the most holy Virgin, how could Blessed Jordan fail to be a truly great preacher? He made his voice heard in many Italian provinces, and as he was in Germany in 1301 it is thought that he preached there too. But it was chiefly in Florence that he gained his greatest renown as a preacher. He preached there as often as five times a day, in the churches and in the public squares. He often commenced to treat a subject in the morning in one church, continued it in another

in the middle of the day, and concluded it in a third in the evening. The Florentines followed him from church to church; some of them took notes of his sermons which have been preserved. They show him to have been a preacher of simple but powerful and instructive discourses. He preached Christ crucified, and founded his sermons on doctrine, and illustrated his subject with choice examples from Holy Scripture, and anecdotes from the lives of the saints. He adopted the custom newly introduced, of preaching not in Latin but in his native Tuscan. He was a contemporary of Dante, and contributed much to perfect the Tuscan language. His sermons are regarded as a precious treasure of the language of the period.

He would have cared little, however, to be considered one of the founders of modern Italian. All he wished was to labor for the conversion of sinners. It was for that he studied and preached. And he was bound to succeed. If zeal is often sufficient, talent and zeal together are sure of success. But when God, setting aside the ordinary laws of nature worked miracles to show his approbation of

his servant's preaching, then the effect was immense. This was often the case. One day a brilliant red cross appeared on his brow. Every one saw it, and all were filled with amazement. The effect of his sermons in Florence was truly marvellous. Public morality was completely changed. Thousands of evil livers abandoned their sinful habits. Immodest women became models of chastity, enemies were reconciled and became fast friends. All this was lasting, for he took care to ensure their perseverance, by pointing out to them the means of perseverance; such as hearing daily mass, receiving the sacraments often, morning and evening prayer, pious reading, the practise of calling the presence of God to their minds, the remembrance of the vanity of this world, the eternity which awaits us, the pains of hell and the joy of heaven. Not a few of his penitents and disciples, following his saintly advice, became noted for sanctity. One of his disciples was Blessed Silvester of Valdiseve, a Camaldulense monk. Blessed Jordan often preached for two hours, and was frequently completely exhausted at the end of his sermons. Blessed Silvester, whose name in the world was Ventura,

taking compassion on him waited at the foot of the stairs of the pulpit to offer him some wine to refresh him after his exertions. They soon became united in the bonds of a holy friendship; and in time Ventura entered as a lay brother into the Camaldulense monastery at Florence.

Blessed Jordan founded several confraternities in Pisa, one of them, that of the Holy Saviour, has lasted till our own days, preserving its primitive constitutions.

In spite of the success he met with he remained untouched by pride. Humility filled his heart and animated all his actions; and he never lost an opportunity of showing his utter contempt of the world. One day as he and several Dominicans were walking on the high road they saw a strange and unusual sight; perfect happiness in the midst of profound misery; a poor man half naked gayly singing as he went along. He drank water from the wells, and ate dry bread given him in charity, and was perfectly content. Blessed Jordan said to his companions, "Do you see this man? contrary to what would appear he possesses jewels so precious that a king cannot have

them, and which princes would willingly give a hundred thousand crowns to possess." What are these precious stones?" asked the Fathers. "One," said Blessed Jordan, "is Security. This poor man eats and drinks without fearing danger, he does not dread poison in his food. This is one precious stone which a prince would willingly pay dear for if he could buy it with money. Another precious stone is that this poor man has no money, and no one wishes him evil; on the contrary, a prince is surrounded by enemies who seek to kill him. These are two precious stones. I could mention many others, and oh! how precious they are! how beautiful! This poor man possesses them, princes can only long for them."

In 1311 Blessed Jordan was sent to Paris, by the Master General of the Dominican Order, to teach theology in the famous monastery of Saint James in that city; but he was taken sick when he arrived at Piacenza, and died there August 19th, 1311. He had been a Dominican thirty-one years. As soon as the news of his death reached Pisa many of the principal inhabitants went to Piacenza to carry back

his body to the city where he had lived and labored so long. He was buried in the church of the Dominican monastery at Pisa, near the altar of Saint Peter Martyr. His relics remained there until 1580, when they were translated to the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in 1686 they were finally translated to the Rosary Altar. His cultus was formally approved by Pope Gregory XVI.

Prayer.

Ant. Let all who hope in Thee, O Lord, be glad, for Thou hast blessed the just man, Thou hast crowned him with the shield of Thy good will.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed Jordan.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who madest Blessed Jordan, Thy confessor, a minister meet for preaching Thy Gospel, grant that, in imitation of him, we may do the works which Thou ordainest, and so gain the fruit of eternal salvation through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESED PETER GEREMIA.

BLESSED PETER GEREMIA.

MARCH 10.

THE order of Friar Preachers, instituted for the good of the Church, never produced so many great men and saints as in the times of her greatest need. During the great western schism, which lasted forty years, our order gave to the church three saints, famous for all times, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint Antoninus of Florence, and that truly wonderful woman, Saint Catharine of Sienna. But the order also rejoiced in numbers of others, whose lives although not less holy, are not as widely known. Among them must be placed Blessed Peter Geremia, the subject of our present sketch.

He was a native of Palermo, in Sicily. His parents were illustrious for nobility and piety. Andouin Geremia, his father, was Fiscal-Procurator to Mary, Queen of Sicily, and his mother, Constanzia, was of the noble family of

the Neri of Genoa. Having been born on the feast of Saint Peter's chains, August 1st, 1381, he was give the name of Peter at baptism. As soon as he could speak his pious mother taught him how to pray, and being accustomed to make a daily visit to the Dominican church, she caused him to be carried there also to form him to habits of piety in youth. Little Peter did not disappoint his mother's pious expectations, and learnt to love and fear God from the earliest dawn of reason. He made as much progress in the rudiments of learning as he did in piety. After mastering grammar, rhetoric, and logic, his parents, believing that God had given them this child to raise the prestige of their family, at the age of eighteen sent him to study law in the University of Bologna. He soon took the lead among the students, and when the regent of studies was obliged to be absent, he requested Peter to take his place. In this position, so trying to a young man, he acquitted himself with undoubted success.

Having completed his studies he prepared himself to take the degree of Doctor of Laws. But one of those unforeseen circumstances

which completely change a man's life, now happened to him. One night he heard a tapping at his bedroom window. It could not be robbers, for he was in the third story. What was it? But while he was wondering at so strange a thing he heard the same sound repeated, louder than before. He was seized with fear; his blood froze in his veins. Not daring to arise he called out, "Who is knocking there?" Immediately he heard loud cries of weeping, and a sad and tremulous voice said, "I am the soul of your kinsman," mentioning the name. "After having taken the degree of Doctor of Law I practised at the bar, where I exercised the office of Advocate with much success, and gained a high reputation. Blind and unfortunate man that I was, to gain wealth and fame, I undertook, against my conscience, to defend unjust causes. Before the awful tribunal of God I found myself without any advocate, and having nothing in my defence I was condemned to eternal pain. I am damned, and damned for all eternity! But before justice casts me into hell, God has sent me to warn you. Fly from the tribunals of men if you desire to

be acquitted before the awful tribunal of God."

Thoroughly alarmed Peter entered into serious reflection on the dangers of the life he was about to adopt, and shuddered when he thought of his relative's sad fate in the same state of life. "Why should I risk the salvation of my soul and endanger my happiness in eternity for imaginary honors, passing pleasures, and hollow deceits?" he said to himself. "Oh Peter! God has sent a dead man to warn thee of the dangers thou wilt encounter in the most honorable employments, God has sent thee a damned soul to tell thee that possessing a fortune on earth thou wilt perchance render thyself the companion of his sufferings in hell. Dream no longer of taking the Doctor's degree, but betake thyself to a study which will teach thee only the things of salvation." He conceived the resolution of consecrating himself to God, and made a vow of perpetual chastity; and to enable him to keep it he went to a locksmith and bought an iron chain, which he fastened round his waist. He wore it fifty years, although it worked its way into his flesh and caused him excessive pain.

He became aware of a religious vocation, and earnestly prayed for guidance in making his choice. In His wisdom God led him to choose the Dominican order. He lost no time in presenting himself to the Prior of Bologna, and humbly asked to be received. The Prior, who knew his piety and eminent qualifications, in due time gave him the habit, and he began his novitiate. He was in his nineteenth year. His vocation was destined to meet with a severe test. His father had hoped much from his son's talents, and was inconsolable when he heard of his entrance into religion. He went to Bologna to persuade him to return home. When he arrived at the Dominican monastery he demanded to see his son. The Prior willingly gave permission, but the fervent novice refused to see his father, fearing that the voice of nature would overcome his resolution and tempt him to abandon his vocation. He begged the novice master to excuse him, beg his father's blessing for him, and assure him that he was quite happy and fully resolved, by the grace of God, to persevere in the life he had chosen. His father was very angry, and bitterly accused him of ingratitude,

and threatened that if the Fathers did not at once give him up he would obtain vengeance. The novice master recommended him to wait a few days, promising that he should see his son. Grace began to work in his father's heart. "If God," he said to himself, "asks from me the sacrifice of my son, He is the master, my dear son belongs more to Him than to me. May it never happen me to oppose the omnipotent God. The only grace I ask is to be allowed to embrace him. I love him more than I love myself." And when he saw his son he exhorted him to persevere in his holy vocation.

Thus freed from the temptation his father's love had cast in his way, Peter applied himself to acquire religious perfection. He made his profession in due time, and then began his ecclesiastical studies, and knowing well that all true knowledge comes from the Father of light He studied chiefly in the book of the cross, and made as much progress in his studies by prayer as by mental application. After having been ordained priest he began to preach. Inflamed with love for God, and consumed by a burning zeal for the salvation of souls he was a true christian preacher. Spiritual

unction gave a wonderful force to his words, and his sermons touched the hearts and consciences of his hearers. He preached in all parts of Italy, and the number of solid and lasting conversions he worked could not be estimated. He became so famous as a preacher that when Saint Vincent Ferrer passed through Bologna in 1416, he desired to see him. When they met Saint Vincent lovingly embraced him, and exhorted him to continue preaching, to which it was evident God had especially called him.

In 1427 he was deputed by Father Bartholomew Texier, Master General of the order, to make a visitation of the Italian Dominican monasteries, in which he was completely successful, for he restored strict discipline in every one he visited. He was summoned by Pope Eugenius IV. to take part in the General Council of Florence. As soon as his departure became known in Palermo, where he was stationed at the time, the City Senate assembled and wrote a letter to the king of Sicily, begging him to ask the Pope and the Dominican General to allow him to remain in Palermo. The king authorized the Senate to hinder his

departure, but the Pope would not consent that his talents should be lost to the church, and insisted that he should be present at the council. He attracted much attention during the council by his zeal and learning, and especially by his answers to the objections against catholic doctrine made by the Greeks. The Pope vainly attempted to induce him to accept high ecclesiastical honors, so great was his esteem for him.

After the council he returned to Palermo, where he spent several years in the strictest observance and in apostolic labors. He gave several hours a day to prayer, and his penances were so severe that they deserve to be compared with those of the ancient saints of the desert. His sermons produced so much effect that the island of Sicily was completely changed. In Palermo the churches were too few and too small to contain the immense crowds which flocked to them at every service, and when he himself preached it became necessary to preach in the open air. And what happened to many saints happened to him. God caused his voice to reach a distance beyond the power of man. Those as much as

a mile distant could hear him distinctly. One day he was so exhausted that he could only speak in a whisper, and was advised by the Fathers not to attempt to preach. "Have confidence in God," he said, "the Lord will give words to those who preach the Gospel." His trust was not misplaced, and his faith not in vain. His voice was at once restored to him, and he could be distinctly heard by all. Another time, as he was preaching in the square in front of the Cathedral of Palermo, a rich man, on his way to commit a murder, passed at a great distance from where he was preaching, yet he heard these words of the sermon, "Blind sinner, reflect on what you are about to do! Be not overcome by passion, flee from the sin your heart leads you to commit." Thinking that the words were especially addressed to him he was enraged against the holy preacher. But reflecting that he could not have heard except by a miracle, he repented of his evil intention, and when the sermon was over went to seek the holy Father, to whom he declared that he now pardoned his enemy from his heart the injury he had done him.

Having gone to preach on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a chapel on the summit of a mountain, he began to pray before going into the pulpit. During prayer he saw the heavens opened, and a number of angels descend to a cave close by. They quickly returned to heaven, carrying with them several souls. God revealed to him that they were the souls of some young girls, who having left their homes to hear the sermon were captured by brigands, who not being able to persuade them to consent to sin, had brutally murdered them, hiding their bodies in the cave. Thus these humble maidens had merited the double crown of virginity and martyrdom. Blessed Peter preached with a power unusual even to him, and narrated his vision. After the sermon he led the people in procession to the cave, where the bodies of the virgin martyrs were found. They were carried to the chapel on the mountain, and buried with all the solemnity so holy a death deserved.

Remaining in the choir one night after matins to pray, he saw a soul, pale, deformed, and so feeble that it could scarcely rise from

its vault. "Peter," it said to him, "I am the Father who died ten days ago. I am now in purgatory, where I am expiating the faults of my life. I am condemned to remain there a long time. But God, whose mercies are infinite, will remit me the rest of the pain I ought to suffer if you will but offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for me. Dear Father, I conjure you have pity on me." Blessed Peter promised to say Mass as soon as it was daylight, upon which the soul immediately vanished. He said Mass most fervently at day-break, and prayed during the day for that soul. The following night it appeared again, but oh! how different was its state. Clothed in pure light, filled with joy, it thanked him for his charity, and assured him that he also would enjoy the glory of Paradise.

During the time when Blessed Peter was Prior of the Monastery of Saint Zita, in Palermo, the Father-procurator went to him one day and told him that there was no food in the larder. The holy Prior strapped a wallet on his shoulders, and walked to the seashore, where he took a small boat and sailed out to sea where many fishermen were fishing for tun-

nies. They had been very successful that morning, and were in the best of spirits. He asked them to give him some of the fishes they had caught, but was rudely refused. He bore this affront meekly, and getting into the little boat again in which he had sailed out he raised his eyes to heaven, and lovingly complained to God, "O my God," he said, "I have done all I can to provide for the necessities of my brothers, your faithful servants; it now belongs to you to assist them." When he had sailed about a mile towards the shore the tunnies caught by the fishermen broke their nets, and swam in a shoal after the holy Father. Astonished at what they saw the fishermen understood that God wished to punish them for their want of charity. They followed him, begged him to forgive them, and entreated him to return and bless their nets. Blessed Peter did so, and made the sign of the cross over the shoal of fishes, which immediately swam back and re-entered the nets they had left. The fisherman took more than a thousand that morning, and sent as many to the monastery as the Fathers needed.

He worked a much more wonderful miracle

by changing the heart of an impenitent sinner, and leading him back to God by penance. There was a man in Palermo, who lived so wicked a life, that all were scandalized. Blessed Peter conceived in his heart a great pity for him, and tried to persuade him to amend his life and to do penance for his sins. In words, inspired by true charity, he warned him of the danger of eternal loss, reminded him of the scandal he was giving, described to him the certainty and severity of God's judgment, and told him that if he did not quickly repent God would punish him as he deserved. But instead of receiving this advice in the spirit in which it was given the wretched man resented it, and in his anger dared to strike him. God, who always defends those who labor for Him, withered up the hand and arm which had inflicted the blow. The sinner fell on his knees and begged the saint to obtain for him the use of his arm again, promising to abandon his sins, and to do penance for his scandalous life. He was instantaneously cured, when Blessed Peter prayed for him as he desired. He kept his word and gave great edification for the rest of his life by his genuine piety.

It was Blessed Peter's custom to invite all the poor of the city to a feast on Saint Zita's day. He served them himself at the monastery door, and when, as not unfrequently happened, food became scarce God miraculously increased the store. These, and many other no less wonderful miracles, made Blessed Peter very famous, and numbers of young men were attracted to the order by his holiness and took the habit.

When his office of Prior of Saint Zita in Palermo expired he was appointed novice master, an office which required great prudence, tact, and charity, joined to the rigorous observance of the rule. He was equal to all required of him, and remained novice master until 1444, when he petitioned the Provincial Chapter to free him from so grave a responsibility, that he might devote himself again to preaching. His petition was granted, and he went to the monastery of Catania, where he worked much good by his sermons. While there an eruption of Mount Etna took place, and the town and its inhabitants were threatened with utter destruction. Blessed Peter, who confided in the intercession of the holy martyr Saint Agatha, took the veil which covered her tomb and pre-

sented it to the flames, praying God to have pity on his people. And as he prayed the flames stopped, and the eruption ceased. Every one attributed this divine favor as much to Blessed Peter's prayers as to Saint Agatha's merits.

Several years before his death the sea became so rough that no ships could come into harbor and a famine set in among the poor. They had recourse to Blessed Peter in their misery. "Banish all sadness" he said to the Magistrates, who went to ask his prayers; "before the sun sets Providence will send you wheat in abundance." They retired full of hope, and Blessed Peter began to pray to God to take pity on His people. As soon as he had finished his prayer he turned towards the sea, and there he saw the answer to his prayers—a ship on the horizon. But the winds were so strong that every one thought the ship would be dashed to pieces on the rocks. As soon as Father Peter began to pray again, the ship sailed safely into port, contrary to all hope, and the famine was at an end.

He raised the dead to life, and was often seen surrounded by heavenly light. But in proportion as God endowed him with spirit-

ual gifts he tamed his body by fasting and penance. Subject to many bodily infirmities he bore them with exemplary patience, and was never sad or downcast, except when God deprived him of sufferings for a time. He regarded sickness and pain as God's favors, and when they were not bestowed on him he thought he was in disgrace; and once, when he was asked why he was so sad, although he was not suffering, he said: "Because it seems that God has withdrawn his hand from me."

His great age,—he was now nearly seventy,—and the wear and tear of his constant preaching made it necessary to send him back to Sicily, his native country. When he bade the people farewell from the pulpit all were in tears, and the crowd that gathered round the monastery doors to beg his blessing for the last time, was so great that he was obliged to put off his departure for three days. The people set guards at the door to hinder him from going away, until he told them it was God's will and his superior's commands, and that he was bound to obey. And when at length he set off many accompanied him a long way on his journey. They never saw him again, for as soon as he

got to Palermo he fell sick, and the day of his death was revealed to him. He said holy Mass as often as he was able. Vesting one morning in the sacristy, he told one of the fathers that it was the last Mass he would say. As soon as his Mass was over he was obliged to return to bed. During his sickness he often repeated the words of Saint Augustine. "Here burn, cut here, do not spare me, so that Thou, O Lord, mayest spare me in eternity."

On the day of his passage from this world he asked that the last sacrament should be administered to him. Before receiving the holy viaticum he called all the fathers round his bed, and earnestly exhorted them to persevere in the love and service of God; not to spare themselves, to practice mortification, cultivate brotherly love and the spirit of strict observance of the Dominical rule and constitutions. Seeing them all in tears he endeavored to console them, and promised to visit them in spirit when by the mercy of God he should be enjoying the bliss of heaven. And when, some time later, a great increase of fervour was manifested in the community, it was universally attributed to his prayers. He died March 3d,

1452, in his seventy-second year. When the Fathers were washing his body they saw a singular swelling round his loins, and made an incision to see what was its cause. They found the iron chain which he had put on immediately after his conversion, fifty years before, on the night, when as we have narrated, a damned soul appeared to him to warn him of the danger of eternal loss. By continual penance he had preserved his virginity intact. How differently do we! we desire to be holy it is true, but we shrink from penance, and our good resolutions and holy desires are of but short duration. We easily give way to temptation because we do not imitate the saints by constant prayer and a life of penance.

His holy body was laid on a bier, and placed in the church, where it was venerated by all. After his burial, miracles took place at his tomb and it was not many days before pilgrims came to pray there. Only a month had passed when the Fathers were obliged, in answer to the people's request, to open his tomb. His body was perfectly incorrupt. The iron chain was taken from it, and kept as a sacred relic,

and miracles were obtained by many who touched it.

Blessed Peter was beatified in 1784 by Pope Pius VI. He left behind him several literary works: a volume of sermons, a treatise on the passion of Jesus Christ, treatises on faith, on the creed, and on the Lord's prayer, all of which have several times been printed. Five volumes in manuscript are also preserved in the church of Saint Dominic in Palermo, and two others in the archives of Saint Dominic's Monastery in Bologna, comprising treatises on Moral Theology and Canon Law.

Prayer.

Ant. O Lord our God, how marvellous is Thy name through all the earth! For Thou hast crowned Thy saint with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands.

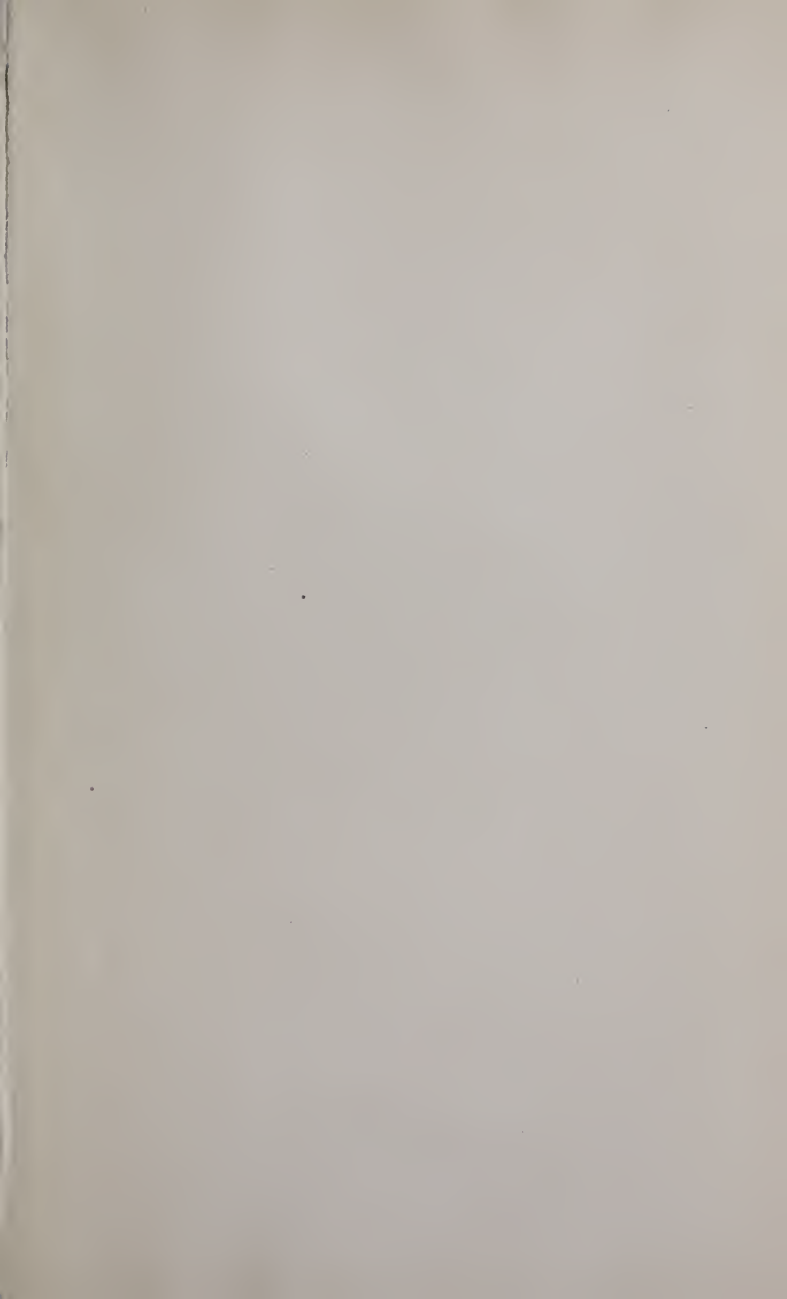
V. Pray for us, O Blessed Peter.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the prayers and exhortations of Blessed Peter, Thy confessor, didst

mercifully cause many wanderers to return to the path of righteousness, enlarge our hearts, we beseech Thee, through his holy intercession, that we may ever run in the way of Thy commandments, through Christ our Lord. Amen.





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